A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas

in Theravada Buddhist Meditation

Henepola Gunaratana

E-mail: bdea@buddhanet.net
Web site: www.buddhanet.net

Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.

A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation

by

Henepola Gunaratana

submitted to the
Faculty of the College of Arts and Science
of the American University
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Philosophy

1980
The American University
Washington, D.C. 20016

This book is dedicated to my dear parents and teachers.

Bhante Gunaratana was born in 1927 in a small village in Sri Lanka and was ordained at the age of 12 as a Buddhist monk. At the age of 20 he was given higher ordination in Kandy in 1947. At the invitation of the Sasana Sevaka Society, Bhante Gunaratana went to the United States in 1968 to serve as Hon. General Secretary of the Buddhist Vihara Society of Washington, D.C. He has also pursued his scholarly interests by earning a B.A., an M.A., and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from The American University. He is the author of *Come and See*, *The Path of Serenity and Insight*, *The Jhanas* and *Mindfulness In Plain English*. Venerable Gunaratana is the abbot and the president of the Bhavana Society, a Forest Monastery and Retreat Centre in West Virginia, U.S.A.

A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation

by

Henepola Gunaratana

ABSTRACT

This work provides an analytical study of the *jhānas*, an important set of meditative attainments in the contemplative discipline of Theravāda Buddhism. Despite their frequent appearance in the texts, the exact role of the *jhānas* in the Buddhist path has not been settled with unanimity by Theravāda scholars, who are still divided over the question as to whether they are necessary for attaining nibbāna. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to determine the precise role of the *jhānas* in the Theravāda Buddhist presentation of the way to liberation.

For source material the work relies upon the three principal classes of authoritative Theravāda texts – the Pāli Tipiṭaka, its commentaries, and its sub-commentaries. To traditional canonical investigations modern methods of philosophical and psychological analysis are applied in order to clarify the meanings implicit in the original sources.

The examination covers two major areas: first the dynamics of *jhāna* attainment, and second, the function of the *jhānas* in realizing the ultimate goal of Buddhism, *nibbāna* or final liberation from suffering.

Regarding the first issue it is shown that Theravāda Buddhism treats the process of *jhāna* attainment from a philosophical perspective which views the mind as a complex of factors alterable by methodical training. The eight attainments of *jhāna* – four fine material *jhānas* and four immaterial *jhānas* – are examined individually in terms of their components and in their progressive scale of development. Also discussed are the supernormal powers of knowledge (*abhiññās*) resulting from *jhāna* and the connections between the *jhānas* and rebirth.

Regarding the second issue, the work brings to light several significant findings concerning the soteriological function of the *jhānas*. Fundamental to the conclusions in this area is the discovery that the Theravāda tradition distinguishes two kinds of *jhāna*, one mundane (*lokiya*), the other supramundane (*lokuttara*). Mundane *jhāna*, comprising

the eight attainments, belongs to the concentration group of the threefold Buddhist discipline – morality, concentration, and wisdom. Supramundane *jhāna* is the mental absorption immediately concomitant with the higher realizations called the supramundane paths and fruits, which issue from the full threefold discipline.

Theravāda Buddhism regards the mundane *jhāna* as neither sufficient nor indispensable for reaching liberation. They are insufficient as they only suppress the defilements and must be supplemented by wisdom. They are optional rather than indispensable since they need not be developed by all practitioners. Meditators belonging to the "vehicle of serenity" utilize *jhāna* to produce the concentration required as a basis for wisdom, meditators belonging to the "vehicle of bare insight" can employ a lower degree of concentration without achieving mundane *jhāna*. But supramundane *jhāna* pertains to the experience of all meditators who reach the paths and fruits, since these latter always occur at a level of *jhānic* absorption.

The dissertation also explains the two approaches to meditation and shows how they lead by stages to the higher realisations. The supramundane *jhānas* are examined analytically both in themselves and in comparison with their mundane counterparts. Also discussed are two additional attainments connected with the *jhānas* – fruition and cessation.

Finally, by means of a canonical sevenfold typology, the relation of the various grades of liberated individuals to the accomplishment of mundane *jhāna* is investigated. The conclusion emerges that though liberation from suffering, the ultimate goal of the discipline, is attainable by wisdom with or without mundane *jhāna*, Theravāda Buddhism places additional value on liberation when it is accompanied by mastery over the *jhānas* and skill in the modes of supernormal knowledge.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

The teaching of the Buddha is essentially a path leading to the cessation of suffering. Central to this path is the practice of meditation. Meditation may be considered the heart of applied Buddhism, to which all the preliminary stages of the path lead and out of which the higher stages flow. One of the most important aspects of Buddhist meditation is a set of attainments called, in Pāli, the *jhānas*. The *jhānas* are encountered repeatedly in the scriptural texts of early Buddhism. They were instrumental in the Buddha's own achievement of enlightenment and recurrently enter into the course of training he formulated for his disciples – in the stage of the path preparatory to the higher insights, in immediate association with the liberating wisdom, and again in the end as a spiritual endowment of the fully liberated man.

It is the purpose of the present work to examine the *jhānas* in order to determine their role in the Buddhist spiritual discipline. The perspective from which they are viewed is that of Theravāda Buddhism, the Buddhist school to which the author belongs as a fully ordained monk. Theravāda Buddhism is probably the oldest continuous Buddhist tradition, maintaining the most accurate record of what the Buddha himself actually taught. Theravāda Buddhist meditation, inclusive of the *jhānas*, has been reliably treated by several contemporary writers of scholarly stature. The present work, however, approaches the *jhānas* from a different angle. Whereas most scholars deal principally with the topics of meditation and only incidentally with the *jhānas* themselves, in our dissertation we focus primarily upon the *jhānas* as they are in their own nature, treating the topics of meditation only in a summary way. Our approach is psychological and analytical, our intent to look into the inner constitution of the *jhānas*, lay bare their inner dynamics, and see how they contribute to the purification and liberation of mind which is the goal of the Buddhist discipline.

Our work draws principally upon the scriptures and exegetical literature of Theravāda Buddhism. These sources, composed almost entirely in Pāli, fall into three primary layers of differing degrees of authoritative weight. The first and most authoritative is the Pāli Canon. This is the Tipiṭaka – the three "baskets" or collections of scripture: the Vinayapiṭaka, the collection of monastic discipline; the Suttapiṭaka, the collection of the Buddha's discourses; and the Abhidhammapiṭaka, the collection of psycho-philosophical treatises. The texts in these collections belong to different chronological strata, but a good portion, particularly of the Vinaya and suttas, can be reasonably ascribed to the Buddha himself.

The Suttapitaka was the most useful of the three for our purposes. This collection is divided into five sections: the Dīgha Nikāya (long discourses), the Majjhima Nikāya (middle length discourses), the Saṃyutta Nikāya (topically related discourses), the Aṅguttara Nikāya (numerically arranged discourses), and the Khuddaka Nikāya (miscellaneous discourses). We have relied most heavily on the first four and parts of the fifth as being the most ancient parts of the Pāli Canon.

The Abhidhammapiṭaka gives the appearance of being a somewhat later scholastic attempt at systematization, but its teachings are fully consistent with the suttas and help shed light on many points requiring precise analysis and fine definition. We have found particularly helpful the first two books of the Abhidhamma, the Dhammasaṅgaṇi and the Vibhaṅga, which in conjunction with their commentaries clarify a number of knotty points concerning the *jhānas*. The difference between the suttas and the Abhidhamma is that between a practical pedagogical approach and a philosophically rigorous one. But the two standpoints are found to harmonize and to repeatedly illuminate each other.

The second layer of Pāli literature is the commentaries (*aṭṭhakathā*). The commentaries were composed for the purpose of elucidating the words of the Tipiṭaka and for drawing out their implications. Their origins go back to very ancient times but they were edited and cast into final standardized versions in the 5th century A.C. by the great Buddhist commentator Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, who came from India to Sri Lanka expressly for that purpose. Fundamental to the entire commentarial collection is Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa's own original work, the Visuddhimagga (Path of Purification), a massive masterpiece which orders the complex field of Buddhist meditation into an organic comprehensive whole.

The third class of Pāli texts we drew upon is the *Ṭīkās*. The *Ṭīkās* are subcommentaries, composed with three principal purposes in view: to elucidate difficult points in the commentaries, to explore important side issues, and to systematize still further the material of the Tipiṭaka. The most useful of these has been the great *Ṭīkā* to the *Visuddhimagga*, the *Mahāṭīkā* called *Paramatthamañjūsā*, composed by Ācariya Dhammapāla who lived in South India in the 6th century A.C. This same teacher is also the author of the *Ṭīkās* to the Dīgha Nikāya, the Majjhima Nikāya, and the Saṃyutta Nikāya.

For passages from the Suttapiṭaka we have principally relied upon the editions of the Pali Text Society. For the commentaries and subcommentaries we have used the editions of the Burmese Buddha Sāsana Samiti, which started its work in connection with the Sixth Buddhist Council held in Burma in 1956. Sinhalese and Devanāgari editions were also consulted when available. Our secondary sources were English and Sinhalese treatises relating to the subject. For the sake of easy cross-reference we refer to commentaries and subcommentaries by their full scriptural titles rather than by their individual names; e.g. we refer to the commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya as *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* rather than as *Papañcasūdani*, to the *Ṭīkā* to the *Visuddhimagga* as *Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā* rather than as *Paramatthamañjūsā*, etc. Both names for commentarial works can be found in the list of abbreviations of works used.

Some words are called for concerning the translation of material from the original Pāli sources. Whenever a Pāli text was available in English we have consulted the translation, but in a large number of cases we have found the English renderings unsatisfactory, due either to inaccurate translation or to the use of archaic language. Therefore we have often preferred to give our own translations indicated by the phrase "writer's translation" (Wr. tr.). Fortunately this procedure was not necessary in the case of the *Visuddhimagga*, which has been excellently translated by the Venerable Bhikkhu Ñānamoli under the title

The Path of Purification. In some instances, where we present a passage translated by another writer using different renderings for technical terms than those we prefer, we give either our own preference or the Pāli terms in brackets following the other's rendering; but where the context makes it clear what term is intended we leave the passage as it stands. In all cases of doctrinally important passages translated from the Pāli, by ourselves or others, we give the Pāli original below in the footnotes. For the convenience of the reader a Pāli-English Glossary is provided in the back giving our usual preferred renderings of technical terms connected with Buddhist meditation appearing in the text.

Footnote and bibliographical references to books published in Sri Lanka use "Ceylon" or "Sri Lanka," as indicated on the title page; the latter is used when no country is mentioned. The systems of transliteration used in citations of Pāli texts in the Sinhalese and Burmese scripts are based upon those used by the Pali Text Society.

Our sincere thanks are due to Professor David F. T. Rodier, Director of the Dissertation, Department of Philosophy and Religion, The American University, and to the other readers, Professor Charles S. J. White of The American University and Professor Cornelia Dimmitt of Georgetown University, for reading the dissertation and for making valuable suggestions. We are also sincerely grateful to the Venerable Dr. Bhikkhu Bodhi who made many very valuable suggestions and helped polish the style and structure of the work. Last but not least we must sincerely thank Dr. Hazel Marie Griffin for her kind hospitality and valuable suggestions in arranging the footnotes and bibliography.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The Doctrinal Context of Jhāna

In the discourses the Buddha says that just as in the great ocean there is but one taste, the taste of salt, so in his doctrine and discipline there is but one taste, the taste of freedom (*vimuttirasa*).[1] The taste of freedom that flavors the Buddha's doctrine and discipline is the taste of spiritual freedom and it is to the full experience of this taste that the entire teaching of the Buddha is directed. Spiritual freedom, from the Buddhist perspective, means freedom from suffering. The problem of suffering is the wellspring out of which the whole current of Buddhist teaching arises; freedom from suffering is the end towards which it moves. Thus the Buddha could say throughout his ministry: "Previously, monks, as also now I make known only suffering and the cessation of suffering."[2] (Wr. tr.).

This focal concern with the issue of suffering is evident from the formula of the four Noble Truths.[3] The doctrine of the Four Noble Truths deals entirely with the problem of suffering, looked at from four different angles. The first Noble Truth exposes the forms and the range of suffering. It shows suffering to be an inextricable ingredient of life itself, tied on the physical side to the vital processes of birth, aging, sickness and death, cropping up on the psychological side as sorrow, grief, dejection, and despair. Suffering, moreover, in the Buddha's picture of the world, becomes multiplied to infinite proportions due to the fact of rebirth. The cycle of pain and sorrow does not turn only once; for all but the enlightened it turns over and over through beginningless time in the form of *saṃsāra*, the round of repeated becoming.

---

1. Richard Morris and E. Hardy, eds. *The Aṅguttara-Nikaya*. [Pt. 1: *Ekanipāta*, *Dukanipāta*, and *Tikanipāta*, edited by Richard Morris. 2d ed. Revised by A. K. Warder; pt. 2: *Catukka-Nipāta*, edited by Richard Morris; pt. 3: *Pañcaka-Nipāta and Chakka-Nipāta*, edited by E. Hardy; pt. 4: *Sattaka-Nipāta*, *Aṭṭhaka-Nipāta*, *and Navaka-Nipāta*, edited by E. Hardy; pt. 5: *Dasaka-Nipāta and Ekādasaka-Nipāta*, edited by E. Hardy; pt. 6: Indexes by Mabel Hunt; Revised and edited by C. A. F. Rhys Davids]. (Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 10, 20, 35, 44, 46, 66. 6 vols. 1885-1910; reprint ed., London: Luzac & Co., 1956-67), 4:203 (hereafter cited as AN.).

2. "Pubbe cāhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññapemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ." V. Trenckner and Robert Chalmers, eds., *The Majjhima-Nikāya*. [Vol. 1: edited by V. Trenckner; vols. 2-3: edited by Robert Chalmers; vol. 4: Index of Words, edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids]. (Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 17, 39, 45, 47, 51, 99. 6 vols in 4, 1888-1925; reprint, 4 vols.; London: Luzac & Co., 1960-64) 1:140 (hereafter cited as MN.).

3. Hermann Oldenberg, ed. *The Vinaya Piṭakam*: *One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pali Language*. (Pali Text Society [Publication Series], vols. 147-48, 160-62. 5 vols., London: Luzac & Co., 1879-1964), 1:10ff (hereafter cited as Vinp.).

Having exposed the range and modes of suffering in the First Noble Truth, in the remaining three the Buddha points out the cause of suffering, its cessation, and the way to its cessation. The cause is craving, the insatiable drive for enjoyment and existence that keeps the wheel of rebirths in constant motion. The cessation of suffering is the reversal of this genetic relation, the complete abandoning and destruction of craving. The way to the end of suffering is the middle way of ethical and mental training that avoids all extremes of conduct and views – the Noble Eightfold Path made up of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Whereas the first three truths provide the doctrinal perspective of the Buddha's teaching, the fourth truth, the truth of the path, prescribes its practical regimen. This regimen focusses upon personal experience. The Buddha does not come into our midst as a savior descended from on high. He comes as an enlightened teacher, a man who has found the way to the end of suffering and who points the way out to others. The path itself every man must follow for himself. It is each man's own delusions and defilements that chain him to the cycle of suffering, and again each man's own efforts at inner purification that pave the road to his deliverance. Since bondage ultimately springs from ignorance (*avijjā*) the key to liberation, for Buddhism, is found in wisdom (*paññā*), a wisdom which must be generated inwardly as an immediate personal understanding of the basic truths of existence. The Dhamma is *paccataṃ veditabbo viññūhi*, (to be realized by the wise within themselves).

It is because personal realization of truth is needed to reach the end of suffering that meditation assumes a position of such crucial importance in the Buddhist formulation of the liberating path. Meditation, for Buddhism, is the means of generating the inner understanding required for deliverance from suffering. Its diversity of techniques stems from the differences in the people to be taught, but its purpose and procedure is the same for all: to produce that purity of mind and clarity of vision needed for the liberating wisdom to arise.

The methods of meditation taught in the Pāli Buddhist tradition are based on the Buddha's own experience, forged by him in the course of his own quest for enlightenment. They are designed to re-create in the disciple who practices them the same essential discovery the Buddha himself made when he sat beneath the Bodhi tree – the discovery of the Four Noble Truths.

The various subjects and methods of meditation expounded in the Pāli scriptures divide into two inter-related systems. One is called the development of serenity (*samathabhāvanā*), the other the development of insight (*vipassanābhāvanā*). The former also goes under the name of the development of concentration (*samādhibhāvanā*), the latter under the name of the development of wisdom (*paññābhāvanā*). The practice of serenity-meditation aims at developing a calm, concentrated, unified state of consciousness as a means of experiencing inner peace and for generating wisdom. The practice of insight-meditation aims at gaining direct understanding of the real nature of phenomena. Of the two, the development of insight is regarded by Buddhism as the essential key to liberation, the direct antidote to the ignorance underlying bondage and suffering.

Whereas serenity-meditation is recognized as common to both Buddhist and non-Buddhist contemplative disciplines, insight meditation is held to be the unique discovery of the Buddha and an unparallelled feature of his path. However, because the growth of insight presupposes a certain degree of concentration (*samādhi*), and serenity-meditation serves to secure this concentration, the development of serenity claims an incontestable place in the Buddhist meditative process. Together the two types of meditation work to make the mind a fit instrument for enlightenment. With his mind unified by means of the development of serenity, made sharp and bright by the development of insight, the meditator can proceed unobstructed to reach the end of suffering.

Focal to both systems of meditation. though belonging inherently to the side of serenity, is a set of meditative attainments called the four *jhānas*. The Pāli word *jhāna* has been rendered by translators into English in various ways. The Venerable Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and I. B. Horner have used "meditation," which to us seems too general. T. W. Rhys Davids offers "rapture" and "ecstasy," which suggest a degree of elation and exuberance inappropriate to the higher *jhānas*. F. L. Woodward's "musing" is too weak and archaic, while Edward Conze's "trance" misleadingly implies a sub-normal state, quite the opposite of *jhāna*. The word "absorption," used by the Venerables Soma Thera, Nyānaponika Thera, and others, is the most suitable of the lot, but that is needed for the Pāli *appaṇā*, which includes the *jhānas* and corresponds closely to "absorption" in literal meaning. For obvious reasons, therefore, we prefer to leave the Pāli *jhāna* untranslated.

The *jhānas* themselves are states of deep mental unification characterized by a total immersion of the mind in its object. They result from the centering of the mind upon a single object with such a degree of attention that inner verbalization, the discursive function of thought, is arrested and eventually silenced, brought to a stop.

The members of the fourfold set of *jhānas* are named simply after their numerical position in the series: the first *jhāna*, the second *jhāna*, the third *jhāna*, and the fourth *jhāna*. The four appear repeatedly in the suttas described by a stock formula showing their process of attainment:

> Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu, quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states of mind, enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought with rapture and happiness born of seclusion.
>
> With the subsiding of applied thought and sustained thought he enters and dwells in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without applied thought and sustained thought, and is filled with rapture and happiness born of concentration.
>
> With the fading away of rapture, he dwells in equanimity, mindful and discerning; and he experiences in his own person that happiness of which the noble ones say: 'Happily lives he who is equanimous and mindful' – thus he enters and dwells in the third *jhāna*.

> With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters and dwells in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.[1] (Wr. tr.).

As this passage indicates, the mind entering upon the *jhānas* draws inwardly more deeply into itself – away from the sense objects impinging on the senses from the external world, upwards to a level of heightened awareness, calm, and purity far surpassing that of discursive thought.

The Importance of *Jhāna*

The importance of the *jhānas* in the Buddhist path to deliverance can readily be gauged from the frequency with which they are mentioned throughout the suttas. The *jhānas* figure prominently both in the Buddha's own experience and in his exhortations to disciples. In his childhood, while attending an annual ploughing festival, the future Buddha spontaneously entered the first *jhāna*. It was the memory of this childhood incident, many years later after his futile pursuit of austerities, that revealed to him the way to enlightenment during his period of deepest despondency.[2] After taking his seat on the banks of the Nerañjarā, the Buddha entered the four *jhānas* immediately before directing his mind to the threefold knowledge that issued in his enlightenment.[3] Throughout his active career the four *jhānas* remained "his heavenly dwelling" (*dibbavihāra*) to which he resorted in order to live happily here and now.[4] His understanding of the corruption, purification and emergence in the *jhānas*, liberations, concentrations, and meditative attainments is one of his ten powers which enable him to turn the matchless wheel of the Dhamma.[5] Just before his passing away the Buddha entered the eight attainments in direct and reverse order; the passing away itself took place directly from the fourth *jhāna*.[6]

The Buddha is constantly seen in the suttas encouraging his disciples to develop *jhāna*. The four *jhānas* are invariably included in the complete course of training laid down for disciples.[7] They figure in the training as the discipline of higher consciousness (*adhicittasikkhā*), right concentration (*sammā samādhi*) of the Noble Eightfold Path, and

---

1. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter, eds., *The Dīgha-Nikāya*. [Vols. 1-2: edited by T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter; vol. 3: edited by J. Estlin Carpenter]. (Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 22, 52, 67. 3 vols. 1880-1910; reprint, London: Luzac & Co., 1960-67), 2:314-15 (hereafter cited as DN.). MN. 1:182.

2. MN. 1:246-47.

3. *Ibid*.

4. DN. 3:220.

5. MN. 1:68-83.

6. DN. 2:156.

7. DN. 1:47-86. MN. 1:175-84, 256-80

the faculty and power of concentration (*samādhindriya*, *samādhibala*). Though a vehicle of dry insight can be found, indications are that this path is not an easy one, lacking the aid of the powerful serenity available to the practitioner of *jhāna*. The way of the *jhāna* attainer seems by comparison smoother and more pleasurable.[1]

The Buddha points to the bliss of the *jhānas* as his alternative to sense pleasures. He says:

> There are, Cunda, four pursuits of pleasure which lead to ultimate disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, peace, direct knowledge, enlightenment, and *nibbāna*. Which four? Here, Cunda, secluded from sense pleasures, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*... the second *jhāna*... the third *jhāna*... the fourth *jhāna*.[2] (Wr. tr.).

His own disciples live devoted to these four pursuits of pleasure, and for them four fruits and benefits are to be expected, namely, attainment of the four stages of deliverance – stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahatship.[3] Just as the river Ganges slopes, inclines and flows to the east, a bhikkhu who develops and cultivates the four *jhānas* slopes, flows, and inclines to *nibbāna*.[4] The Buddha even refers to the four *jhānas* figuratively (*pariyāyena*) as a kind of *nibbāna*; he calls them immediately visible *nibbāna* (*sandiṭṭhikanibbāna*), final *nibbāna* (*parinibbāna*), a factor of *nibbāna* (*tadaṅganibbāna*), and *nibbāna* here and now (*diṭṭhadhammanibbāna*).[5]

---

1. AN. 2:150-52.

2. "Cattāro'me Cunda sukhallikānuyogo ekanta-nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattanti. Katame cattāro? Idha Cunda bhikkhu vivicc'eva kāmehi… paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati… dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ… tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ… catutthaṃ jhānaṃ…" DN. 2:131-32.

4. *Ibid*.

5. M. Léon Feer, ed. *The Saṃyutta-Nikāya of the Sutta-Piṭaka*. [Pts. 1-5: *Sagātha-Vagga*, *Nidāna-Vagga*, *Khandha-Vagga*, *Salāyatana-Vagga*, and *Mahā-Vagga*, edited by M. Léon Feer; pt. 6: Indexes, by Mrs. Rhys Davids], (Pali Text Society [Publications], vols, 8, 19, 25, 31, 42, 56. 6 vols. 1884-1904, reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1960-70), 5:308 (hereafter cited as SN.).

6. AN. 4:453-54.

Overview

Although the *jhānas* claim a place of such overriding importance in the Theravāda Buddhist system of meditation, works on Theravāda Buddhist meditation, beginning even with the commentaries, generally subordinate their accounts of the *jhānas* to the subjects of meditation intended to induce them. Thence the *jhānas* have received little detailed attention in their own right. The present work attempts to correct this deficiency by a close-up examination of the *jhānas* themselves. Our primary objective is to determine the precise role played by the *jhānas* in the Buddhist spiritual discipline directed to final deliverance from suffering. Since the *jhānas* have the immediate aim of producing a progressive purification of the mind, our handling of this general topic proceeds via the working out of solutions to two inter-connected problems. One is the question of how the *jhānas* bring about this purification of consciousness, the other the question of the way and the degree to which this purification contributes to the ultimate goal of Theravāda Buddhism, the attainment of *nibbāna*. Let us consider each of these in turn.

1. The solution to the first problem requires reference to the analytical and psychological standpoint of early Buddhist thought, prominent in all the strata of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. As is well known, Buddhism dispenses with the notion of an enduring self as a unifying principle of experience. Instead of positing a self-identical cognizer behind the workings of the mind, the Buddhist thinkers prefer to treat consciousness as a complex of mental factors coming together in momentary combinations. The *jhānas*, as states of consciousness, are therefore regarded in Theravāda Buddhism as congeries of evanescent factors. The task confronting us is to investigate this analytical approach to the understanding of the *jhānas*. We must see how these meditative states have been dissected into multiple components, scrutinize the internal relations obtaining between their factors, and determine how the *jhānas* link together to purify and refine the level of conscious awareness.

These issues are addressed principally in Chapters II through VI of our treatise. In these chapters we will see the attainment of *jhāna* to be a dynamic process by which the mind is gradual1y purified of its taints. In Chapter II we take a look at certain preliminaries which must be fulfilled as preparation for the practice of meditation. Then in Chapter III we turn to examine the process of *jhāna* attainment itself. The attainment of *jhāna*, we will see, starts with the elimination of the defilements obstructing mental collectedness, grouped together as the five hindrances, (*pañcanīvaraṇa*): sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt.[1] In this chapter we will examine the five hindrances both collectively and individually, determine the extent to which they must be overcome as a prerequisite for entering the *jhānas*, and discuss the methods laid down in the Pāli texts for bringing about their elimination.

1. In Pāli: *Kāmacchanda*, *byāpāda*, *thīnamiddha*, *uddhaccakukkucca*, *vicikicchā*.

In Chapter IV we consider the first *jhāna* in terms of its positive factors of endowment. These are principally the five components – applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness[1] – called the *jhāna* factors because they lift the mind to the level of absorption and remain in the first *jhāna* as its defining constituents. The five factors will be examined individually in detail, then we will see how, together with the other mental phenomena present in the *jhāna*, they function to bring about the mind's absorption in its object.

After reaching the first *jhāna* the ardent meditator can go on to reach the higher *jhānas*. This is done by eliminating the coarser factors in each *jhāna*, those that remain being in each case the defining factors of the successive *jhānas*. In Chapter V we will explore at length the dynamics of this gradual purification of consciousness, discussing not only the *jhāna* factors present in each higher *jhāna* but also the new elements that come to prominence with the ascending refinement of awareness. Having discussed the higher *jhānas* and their factors, we will close this chapter with some remarks on the relation between the tetradic scheme of *jhānas* found in the suttas and a pentadic scheme found in the Abhidhamma.

Beyond the four *jhānas* lies another fourfold set of higher meditative states which deepen the element of serenity developed in the *jhānas*. These attainments, known as the immaterial states (*āruppā*) because they correspond ontologically to the immaterial realms of existence, are the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception.[2] In the Pāli commentaries this set comes to be called the four immaterial *jhānas* (*arūpajjhāna*), the four preceding stages being renamed, for the sake of clarity, the four fine material *jhānas* (*rūpajjhāna*). Often the two sets are joined together under the collective title of the eight *jhānas* or the eight attainments (*aṭṭha samāpattiyo*).

In the first part of Chapter Vl we examine the immaterial *jhānas*, viewing them in terms of their internal structure and sequence of attainment. The second part of the chapter deals with certain super-normal powers of knowledge, called the *abhiññās*, that become available with the mastery of the eight *jhānas*. Then we close the chapter with some remarks on the cosmological implications of the *jhānas*, considered in connection with the doctrines of *kamma* and rebirth.

2. Since the refinement of consciousness produced by the *jhānas* is not pursued as an end in itself, but remains subordinated to the goal of liberation from suffering, the investigations of these early chapters lead directly into our second area of concern, the precise function the *jhānas* exercise in accomplishing the goal of the Buddhist path. The question whether or not the *jhānas* are needed to attain *nibbāna* is a problem which has long vexed scholars of Theravāda Buddhism. Some insist that they are absolutely necessary, others that they can be entirely dispensed with; both sides claim equal canonical support for their positions. The controversy has been further complicated by the recognition the Theravāda tradition gives to two approaches to the development of

1. In Pāli: *Vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā*.

2. In Pāli: *Ākāsānañcāyatana*, *viññāṇañcāyatana*, *ākiñcaññāyatana*, *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*.

the path – one, the "vehicle of serenity" (*samathayāna*), emphasizing the attainment of the *jhānas*, the other, the "vehicle of insight" (*vipassanāyāna*), apparently de-emphasizing them. In the light of this distinction of vehicles it becomes incumbent upon us to determine exactly to what extent *jhāna* is required to fulfill the development of the path. We must clarify the differences between the two vehicles, show the different-kinds of *jhāna*, define the place of the *jhānas* in each vehicle, and explain why, to the extent that *jhāna* is not absolutely necessary, its attainment should still be regarded in Theravāda Buddhism as desirable and worthy of the effort required.

These issues will be dealt with principally in Chapters VII and VIII. The practice of serenity meditation, as we mentioned already, has the primary purpose of providing a basis for the development of wisdom, which alone has the power to actually eradicate the fetters.

In Chapter VII, therefore, we consider the nature of wisdom and its relation to the cultivation of the *jhānas*. We will here deal with the two vehicles of serenity and insight and the way concentration is developed in each. Then we will outline the seven stages of purification in terms of which the Theravāda tradition has ordered the successive stages of the path to liberation.

In Chapter VIII we turn to the relation between the *jhānas* and the higher attainments that result when wisdom reaches full maturity. Here we bring to the fore a distinction between two levels at which the *jhānas* can occur – the mundane (*lokiya*) and the supramundane (*lokuttara*). This distinction, we will see, is of paramount importance for resolving the controversy over the question as to whether or not the *jhānas* are needed for the attainment of deliverance.

Briefly, the mundane *jhānas* are states of deep concentration and serenity pertaining to the preliminary stage of the path, helping to provide the base of concentration needed for wisdom to arise. The supramundane *jhānas* are the levels of concentration pertaining to the four stages of enlightenment called the supramundane paths (*lokuttaramagga*) and to their consequent stages of deliverance resulting from them, the fruits (*phala*).[1] In this chapter we will explore in detail the differences between the two kinds of *jhāna* and the relations of both to the paths and fruits. Then we will take a look at two special higher meditative attainments – the attainment of fruition and the attainment of cessation – available only to noble persons standing on the higher planes of liberation. Finally we turn to another question long debated in Theravāda Buddhist circles – the extent to which the noble persons possess the *jhānas* in their mundane form. We will close our examination with some remarks on the place of the *jhānas* among the accomplishments of the arahat, the fully liberated man. This final discussion will enable us to evaluate the position assigned to the *jhānas* in the spiritual discipline of Theravāda Buddhism.

---

1. The four paths are the path of stream-entry (*sotāpattimagga*), the path of the once-returner (*sakadāgāmimagga*), the path of the non-returner (*anāgāmimagga*), and the path of arahatship (*arahattamagga*) they will be explained at length below. The fruits are named after their respective paths, i.e. the fruit of stream-entry, etc.

Etymology of Jhāna

The great Buddhist commentator Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa traces the Pāli word *jhāna* (Skt. *dhyāna*) to two verbal forms. One, the etymologically correct derivation, is the verb *jhāyati*, meaning to think or to meditate. Buddhaghosa explains: "By means of this yogins meditate, thus it is called *jhāna*... The meaning is that they cognize a given object."[1] (Wr. tr.). The commentator offers in addition a more playful derivation of *jhāna*, intended to illuminate its function rather than its verbal source. This derivation traces the word *jhāna* to the verb *jhāpeti* meaning "to burn up", the reason being: "It burns up opposing states, thus it is called *jhāna*."[2] (Wr. tr.). The purport of this second account is that *jhāna* "burns up" or eliminates the mental obscurations preventing the development of serenity and insight. In this connection a later Pāli commentator, Ācariya Mahānāma, writes with specific reference to supramundane *jhāna*: "He who has this *jhāna* born in himself burns up the passions; thus he destroys and eradicates them" hence this state (*lokuttara jhāna*) is said to be *jhāna* in the sense of 'to burn'." [3]

Buddhaghosa says that *jhāna* has the characteristic mark of contemplation (*upanijj-hānalakkhaṇa*). Contemplation, he states, is twofold: the contemplation of the object (*ārammaṇūpanijjhāna*) and the contemplation of the characteristics of phenomena (*lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna*). The former type of contemplation is exercised by the eight attainments of serenity together with their access, since these contemplate the object taken as the basis for developing concentration. For this reason these attainments, particularly the first four, are given the name "*jhāna*" in the mainstream of Pāli meditative exposition. However, Buddhaghosa also allows that the term can be extended loosely to insight, the paths, and the fruits, on the ground that these perform the work of contemplating the characteristics. The commentator explains:

> Here, insight contemplates the characteristics of impermanence, [suffering and selflessness]. Insight's task of contemplation is perfected by the path, thus the path is called the contemplation of characteristics. The fruit contemplates the

---

1. "Iminā yogino jhāyanti ti pi jhānaṃ… gocaraṃ vā cittentī ti attho." Buddhaghosa, [*Vinaya-Aṭṭhakathā* (*Samanta Pāsādika*)], [Vols. 1-2:] *Pārājikakaṇda Aṭṭhakathathā* [vol. 3:] *Pācityādi Aṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 4:] *Cuḷavaggādi Aṭṭhakathā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 4 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961), 1:116 (hereafter cited as Vin.A.).

2. "Paccanikadhamme jhāpeti ti." *Ibid.*

3. *Saddhammappakāsanī*, cited in Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*: *A General Exposition According to the Pali Canon of the Theravāda School*, (Colombo, Ceylon: M. D. Gunasena & Co., 1962), pp. 24-25 (hereafter cited as BMTP.). "Ajātaṃ jhāpeti jhānena jhānaṃ tena pavuccati ti attano santāne pātubhūtena tena tena lokuttarajjhānena taṃ samaṅgipuggalo ajātameva taṃ taṃ kilesaṃ jhāpeti dahati samucchindati. Tena kāraṇena taṃ lokuttaraṃ jhānanti pavuccati ti attho." Mahānāma, [*Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā Saddhammapakāsinī Nāma Paṭisambhidāmaggaṭṭhakathā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script], 2 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1958), 1:257-58 (hereafter cited as Pts.A.).

> actual characteristic of cessation, thus it is called the contemplation of characteristics.[1] (Wr. tr.).

In brief the twofold meaning of *jhāna* as "contemplation" and "burning up" can be brought into connection with the meditative process as follows. By fixing his mind on the object the meditator reduces and eliminates the lower mental qualities such as the five hindrances and promotes the growth of the higher qualities such as the *jhāna* factors. These, as they emerge, fix upon the object with increasing force, leading the mind to complete absorption in the object. Then, by contemplating the characteristics of phenomena with insight, the meditator eventually reaches the supramundane *jhāna* of the four paths. With this *jhāna* he burns up the defilements and attains the liberating experience of the fruits.

Jhāna and Samādhi

In the vocabulary of Buddhist meditation the word *jhāna* is closely connected with another word, *samādhi*, generally rendered as "concentration." *Samādhi* derives from the prefixed verbal root *saṃ-ā-dhā*, meaning to collect or to bring together, thus suggesting the concentration or unification of the mind. The word *samādhi* is almost interchangeable with the word *samatha*, "serenity", though the latter comes from a different root, *sam* (Skt. *śam*), meaning "to become calm."

In the suttas *samādhi* is defined as mental one-pointedness, *cittass'ekaggatā*,[2] and this definition is followed through with technically psychological rigor in the Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma treats one-pointedness as a distinct mental factor (*cetasika*) present in every state of consciousness. It is a universal mental concomitant with the function of unifying the mind upon its object, ensuring that each state of consciousness takes one and only one object. Those occasions of one-pointedness which go beyond the bare stabilizing of the mind on an object to give the mind some degree of steadiness and non-distraction are subsumed under the name *samādhi*. Thus the Dhammasaṅgaṇi equates these more prominent types of one-pointedness with a string of synonyms inclusive of serenity (*samatha*), the faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*), and the power of concentration (*samādhibala*). From this strict psychological standpoint *samādhi* can be present in unwholesome states of consciousness as well as in wholesome and neutral states. In the former it is called "wrong concentration" (*micchāsamādhi*), in the latter "right concentration" (*sammāsamādhi*).[3]

As a technical term in expositions on the practice of meditation, however, *samādhi* is limited to one-pointedness of the wholesome kind. Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, in the

---

1. "Ettha hi vipassanā aniccalakkhaṇādīni upanijjhāyati. Vipassanāya upanijjāyanakiccaṃ pana maggena sijjhatīti maggo lakkhaṇūpaniijhānanti vuccati. Phalaṃ pana nirodhassa tathalakkhaṇaṃ upanijjhāyatī ti lakkhaṇūpanijjhānanti vuccati." Vin.A. 1:116.

2. MN. 1:301.

3. *Dhammasaṅgaṇipāli*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script], (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961), pp. 19, 92 (hereafter cited as Dhs.).

Visuddhimagga, defines *samādhi* as wholesome one-pointedness of mind (*kusala-cittass'ekaggatā*), and even here we can understand from the context that it is only the wholesome one-pointedness involved in the deliberate transmutation of the mind to a heightened level of calm that is intended by the word *samādhi*.[1] Buddhaghosa explains *samādhi* etymologically as "the centering of consciousness and consciousness concomitants evenly and rightly on a single object."[2] He calls it "the state in virtue of which consciousness and its concomitants remain evenly and rightly on a single object, undistracted and unscattered."[3]

Despite the preciseness of this definition, the word *samādhi* is used in the Pāli literature on meditation with varying degrees of specificity of meaning. In the narrowest sense, as defined by Buddhaghosa, it denotes the particular mental factor (*cetasika*) responsible for the concentrating of the mind, namely, one-pointedness. In a wider sense it can signify the states of unified consciousness that result from the strengthening of concentration, i.e. the meditative attainments of serenity and the stages leading up to them. And in a still wider sense the word *samādhi* can be applied to the method of practice used to produce and cultivate those refined states of concentration, here being equivalent to the development of serenity (*samathabhāvanā*).

It is in the second sense that *samādhi* and *jhāna* come closest in meaning, sharing to a large extent the same reference. The Buddha equates right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) with the four *jhānas*, and in doing so allows concentration to encompass the meditative attainments signified by the *jhānas*. However, even though *jhāna* and *samādhi* can overlap in denotation, certain differences in their suggested and contextual meanings prevent unqualified identification of the two terms. Firstly, behind the Buddha's use of the *jhāna* formula to explain right concentration lies a more technical understanding of the terms. According to this understanding *samādhi* can be narrowed down in range to signify only one factor, the most prominent in the *jhāna*, namely one-pointedness, while the *jhāna* itself must be seen as encompassing the state of consciousness in its entirety, or at least the whole group of mental factors individuating that meditative state as a *jhāna*.

In the second place, when *samādhi* is considered in its broader meaning it involves a wider range of reference than *jhāna*. The Pāli exegetical tradition recognizes three levels of *samādhi*.[4] The first is preliminary concentration (*parikammasamādhi*), which is

1. Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*), translated from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli. (Colombo, Ceylon: R. Semage, 1956), p. 84 (hereafter cited as PP.).

2. *Ibid*., p. 85. "Ekārammaṇe cittacetasikānaṃ samaṃ sammā ca ādhānaṃ." Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, edited by Henry Clarke Warren, and revised by Dhammānanda Kosambi, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 41 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 68 (hereafter cited as Vism.).

3. PP. p. 85. "Tasmā yassa dhammass'ānubhāvena ekarāmmaṇe cittacetasikā samaṃ sammā ca avikkhepamānā avippakinnā ca hutvā tiṭṭhanti, idaṃ samādhānanti veditabbaṃ." Vism., p. 68.

4. Anuruddha, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, *Being Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Bhadanta Anuruddhā-cariya*, *edited in the Original Pali Text with English Translation and Explanatory Notes*, translated by Nārada Mahāthera. (Colombo, Ceylon: Vajirārāma, 1956. Rev. 3d ed. Kandy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon): Buddhist Publication Society, 1975) pp. 389, 395-96 (hereafter cited as Nārada, *Manual*).

produced as a result of the novice meditator's initial efforts to focus his mind on his meditation subject. The second is access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*), marked by the suppression of the five hindrances, the manifestation of the *jhāna* factors, and the appearance of a luminous mental replica of the meditation object called the "counterpart sign" (*paṭibhāganimitta*). The third is absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*), the complete immersion of the mind in its object effected by the full maturation of the *jhāna* factors. Absorption concentration is equivalent to the eight attainments, the four *jhānas* and the four *āruppas*, and to this extent *jhāna* and *samādhi* coincide. However, *samādhi* still has a broader scope than *jhāna*, since it includes not only the *jhānas* themselves but also the two preparatory degrees of concentration leading up to them. Further, *samādhi* also covers a still different type of concentration called "momentary concentration" (*khaṇikasamādhi*), the mobile mental stablization produced in the course of insight-contemplation on the passing flow of phenomena.

Jhāna and the Constituents of Enlightenment

The principles of meditative training expounded by the Buddha during his teaching career were organized by him into seven basic categories comprising altogether thirty-seven partly identical factors. These factors are known as the thirty-seven *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā*, "states pertaining to enlightenment" or "constituents of enlightenment". The seven categories among which they are distributed are: the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five spiritual faculties, the five spiritual powers, the seven enlightenment factors, and the Noble Eightfold Path.[1] The four *jhānas* enter either directly or implicitly into all these sets of training principles, and to appreciate their significance in the Buddhist discipline it will be of value to see how they do so. We will consider first the place of the *jhānas* in the Noble Eightfold Path, the most important and inclusive of the seven groups; then we will go on to note briefly their relation to the other sets.

The eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. These eight are frequently divided into three broader categories: the group of moral discipline (*sīlakkhandha*), the group of concentration (*samādhikkhandha*) and the group of wisdom (*paññākkhandha*).[2] The group of moral discipline comprises the factors of right speech, right action, and right livelihood; the group of concentration the factors of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration; the group of wisdom the factors of right view and right intention. Though wisdom is seen as emerging fully only after concentration has been established its two factors are placed at the beginning of the path because a certain modicum of right understanding and right intentions are needed to embark upon the threefold discipline of morality, concentration and wisdom.

---

1. Note: the original Pāli names for these categories and their members can be found in Appendix 1.

2. MN. 1:301. DN 2:291-315. MN. 3:71-78.

Of the three factors in the morality group, right speech is abstinence from false speech, slander, harsh speech, and idle talk; right action is abstinence from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; and right livelihood is avoiding a wrong means of earning one's living and following a righteous occupation. The Eightfold Path operates at the two levels previously referred to, at the mundane level in the preliminary stages of self-cultivation and at the supramundane level with the attainment of the four supramundane paths. This twofold modality of the path applies to each of its eight factors. The morality factors, considered in the Abhidhamma as three distinct *cetasikas* or mental concomitants, arise at the mundane level whenever a person deliberately abstains from some case of moral transgression. At the supramundane level the three factors occur simultaneously in the states of supramundane path-consciousness, performing the function of cutting off the tendencies towards their opposites.

The three factors of the concentration group also receive an analytical breakdown in the suttas. Right effort is explained as four right endeavors: the endeavor to prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome mental states, to eliminate unwholesome states already arisen, to cultivate unarisen wholesome mental states, and to increase wholesome states already arisen. Right mindfulness consists in mindful contemplation of the four "foundations of mindfulness" (*satipaṭṭhāna*), namely, the body, feelings, states of mind, and mental objects. Right concentration is the unification of the mind into one-pointedness through the four *jhānas*. At the supramundane level right effort becomes the energy factor in the paths and fruits, right mindfulness the factor of attention, and right concentration the factor of mental unification. As we will see, according to the Theravāda commentators concentration in the mundane portion of practice need not be developed to the degree of the four *jhānas*. However, because the stronger the degree of concentration the stabler the basis for insight, the *jhānas* are still commended as guaranteeing the most reliable groundwork of mental calm. And when the supramundane paths and fruits are attained, consciousness occurs with a force of absorption tantamount to the four (or five) *jhānas*. Thence the *jhānas* are included as components of the Noble Eightfold Path, entering via the group of concentration.

Since the concentration group includes the three factors of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, the question might arise about the exact inter-relationship of these factors. In the Cūḷavedalla Sutta the Bhikhunī Dhammadinnā states:

> The four foundations of mindfulness are the bases for concentration, the four right endeavors are the requisites for concentration, the repetition, development, and cultivation of those same states [i.e. mindfulness and effort] are the development of concentration.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The commentary to the sutta explains why the three factors are grouped together under the heading of the last member of the triad:

> Concentration cannot become absorbed in its object with one-pointedness entirely through its own nature. But it can do so when it gains the assistance of

1. "Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā samādhinimittā, cattāro sammappadhānā samādhiparikkhārā, yā tesaṃ yeva dhammānaṃ āsavanā bhāvanā bahulīkammaṃ ayaṃ tattha samādhibhāvanā ti." MN. 1:301.

> energy accomplishing its function of exertion and of mindfulness accomplishing its function of non-forgetfulness... Therefore concentration alone is included in the concentration group by virtue of its own genus; effort and mindfulness are included by virtue of their functions.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Concentration functions as a basis for wisdom. As the Buddha says: "Develop your concentration: for he who has concentration understands things according to their reality".[2] The wisdom group comprises the two factors of right view and right intention, the former being an equivalent term for wisdom proper, the latter its accompaniment. Right view is explained as the undistorted comprehension of the basic laws and truths structuring actuality. At the mundane level it consists in an understanding of the law of kamma, indicating the moral efficacy of action, as well as of the doctrinal contents of the Dhamma – the three characteristics, dependent arising, and the Four Noble Truths. At the supramundane level right view is the wisdom which directly penetrates the Four Noble Truths by "seeing" *nibbāna*, the unconditioned element. Right intention, its companion in this group, consists in thoughts of renunciation, of benevolence, and of non-injury. At the supramundane level right intention becomes the purified mental function free from lust, ill will, and cruelty, which directs the mind towards *nibbāna* and fixes it upon this object.

The three groups of path factors lock together as inter-related stages of training which work in harmony to accomplish the goal aspired to by the discipline, full liberation from suffering. From this angle the groups are designated the three training (*tisso sikkhā*). The morality group makes up the training in the higher morality (*adhisīlasikkhā*), the concentration group the training in the higher consciousness (*adhicittasikkhā*) and the wisdom group the training in the higher wisdom (*adhipaññāsikkhā*).[3] Each of these trainings arises in dependence on its predecessor and provides the support for its successor. Moral training provides the foundation for concentration, since mental composure can only be established when the coarser impulses towards ethical transgressions are controlled and restrained. Concentration provides the foundation for wisdom, since clear perception of the true nature of phenomena requires the purification and unification of the mind. Wisdom reaches its climax in the four paths and fruits, which uproot the subtlest strata of defilements and issue in final liberation from suffering.

From the Noble Eightfold Path we can now turn briefly to the other groups to see how *jhāna* fits in with their constituents of enlightenment. The four foundations of mind-

---

1. "Samādhi attano dhammatāya ārammaṇe ekaggabhāvena appetuṃ na sakkoti. Viriye pana paggahakiccaṃ sādhente satiyā ca apiḷāpanakiccaṃ sādhentiyā laddhūpakāro hutvā sakketi… tasmā samādhiyevattha sajātito samādhikkhandhena sangahito; vāyāmasatiyo pana kiriyato sangahitā honti." MN. 2:261.

2. Nyanatiloka, Com., trans., *The Word of the Buddha*: *An Outline of the Teaching of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon*, (Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society. 1959), p. 93 (hereafter cited as *Word of the Buddha*). "Samadhim bhikkhave bhavetha. Samahito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathabhutam pajanati." SN. 3:13.

3. AN. 1:235-36.

fulness and the four right endeavors are identical, respectively, with right mindfulness and right effort of the Eightfold Path. Insofar as these are called the bases (*nimitta*) and requisites (*parikkhāra*) for concentration, and concentration includes the four *jhānas*, *jhāna* can be seen to arise from the training in these two groups of principles. The four bases of success are the base of success consisting in zeal, the base consisting in energy, the base consisting in consciousness, and the base consisting in inquiry.[1] Since these four constituents of enlightenment are said to be supports for obtaining concentration, and to be directed towards the *abbhiññās* and the supramundane attainments, their connection with the *jhānas* is evident.[2] The five faculties and powers comprise the five identical factors – faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.[3] These are each classified as a faculty (*indriya*) in that they exercise dominance in a particular sphere of spiritual endeavor and as a power (*bala*) in that they cannot be shaken in confrontation with their opposites.[4] The faculty and power of concentration are said to be found in the four *jhānas*.[5] The seven enlightenment factors are mindfulness, investigation of phenomena, energy, rapture, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity.[6] *Jhāna* can be fitted into this group explicitly as the enlightenment factor of concentration; it is also closely associated with the factors of rapture, tranquility, and equanimity, which each rise to prominence in the course of developing the *jhānas*.

1. SN. 5:249-93.

2. *Ibid*., 268.

3. *Ibid*., 193-252.

4. Dhs., pp. 162-67.

5. SN. 5:196.

6. *Ibid*., 63-140.

Chapter Two

THE PRELIMINARIES TO PRACTICE

The *jhānas* do not arise out of a void but in dependence on the right conditions. They are states of mind which can come to growth only when provided with the nutriments conducive to their development. Therefore, prior to beginning meditation, the aspirant to the *jhānas* must prepare a groundwork for his practice by fulfilling certain preliminary requirements. He first has to purify his moral virtue, since virtue forms the irreplaceable support for concentration. Then he must sever the outer impediments to practice and place himself under a qualified teacher. The teacher will assign him a suitable subject for developing *jhāna* and explain to him the methods of contemplation. After learning the methods the disciple must then seek out a congenial dwelling and diligently strive for success. In this chapter we will examine in order each of the preliminary steps which have to be fulfilled before commencing to develop *jhāna*.

The Moral Foundation for Jhāna

A disciple aspiring to the *jhānas* first has to lay a solid foundation of moral discipline. As the Buddha says;

> If a monk should wish 'May I be one who obtains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four *jhānas* pertaining to the higher consciousness, dwellings in happiness here and now' – he should fulfill the observance of moral discipline.[1] (Wr. tr.).

And again:

> For one who is morally corrupt, lacking moral discipline, right concentration is deprived of its supporting condition... But for one who is morally virtuous, endowed with moral discipline, right concentration possesses its supporting condition.[2] (Wr. tr.).

From these two statements we can see that any effort to develop *jhāna* in the absence of moral purity is doomed to failure, while when moral discipline is fulfilled the condition is laid for the practice to bear successful fruit.

---

1. "Ākaṅkheyya ce bhikkhave bhikkhu: catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ abhicetasikānaṃ diṭṭhadhamma-sukhavihārānaṃ nikāmalābhī assaṃ akicchalābhī akasiralābhī ti – sīles'ev'assa paripūrakārī." MN. 1:33.

2. "Dussīlassa bhikkhave sīlavipannassa hatūpaniso hoti sammāsamādhi… sīlavato bhikkhave sīlasampannassa upanisāsampanno hoti sammāsamādhi." AN. 3:19-20.

Moral purity is indispensable to meditative progress for several deeply psychological reasons. Firstly, moral purity is needed in order to safeguard against the danger of remorse (*vippaṭisāra*). Remorse is the nagging sense of guilt that crops up when the basic principles of morality are ignored or deliberately violated. When it arises it brings restlessness, anxiety, and self-reproach, which threaten to disrupt inner calm. Scrupulous conformity to virtuous rules of conduct protects the meditator from this obstacle to his practice. Therefore the Buddha states that wholesome moral principles (*kusalāni sīlāni*) have non-remorse as their benefit and reward, non-remorse has joy and rapture as its benefit and reward, and joy and rapture lead to a succession of purifying states culminating in concentration.[1]

A second reason necessitating a moral foundation for meditation follows from an understanding of the purpose of concentration. Concentration, in the Buddhist discipline, aims at providing a base for wisdom by cleansing the mind of the dispersive, distracting influence of the defilements. In order for the concentration exercises to effectively combat the defilements, the coarser expressions of the latter through the instruments of bodily and verbal action have to first be checked. Moral transgressions being invariably motivated by defilements – by greed, hatred, and delusion – when a person acts in violation of the precepts of morality he excites and reinforces the very same mental factors his practice of meditation is intended to eliminate. This involves him in a crossfire of incompatible aims which will render his attempts at mental purification ineffective. The only way he can avoid frustrating his endeavor to purify the mind of its subtler defilements is to prevent the unwholesome inner impulses from breaking out in the coarser form of unwholesome bodily and verbal deeds. Only when he establishes control over the outer expression of the defilements can he turn to deal with them inwardly as mental obsessions that appear in the process of meditation. But the relation of morality to concentration is not one-sided, for as meditation progresses it brings about in turn a greater purification of morality. As the meditator's mindfulness gains in sharpness and duration it brings to light more clearly the hidden springs of his behavior. This enables him to refrain from subtler types of bodily and verbal transgression and to aspire for more purified modes of conduct.

The practice of moral discipline consists, negatively, in abstinence from immoral actions of body and speech and, positively, in the observance of ethical principles of promoting peace within oneself and harmony in one's relations with others. The basic code of moral discipline taught by the Buddha for the guidance of his lay followers is the five precepts (*pañcasīla*): abstinence from taking life, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from intoxicating drugs and drinks. These principles are binding as minimal ethical obligations for all practitioners of the Buddhist path, and within their bounds considerable progress in meditation can be made. However, those aspiring to reach the higher levels of the *jhānas*, and to pursue the path further to the stages of liberation, are encouraged to take up the more complete moral discipline pertaining to the life of renunciation.

1. AN. 5:1-7.

Pāli Buddhism is unambiguous in its emphasis on the limitations of household life for following the path in its fullness and perfection. Householders can achieve proficiency in serenity and insight, and even reach the supramundane path and fruits. But by way of providing the conditions for leading the holy life the inadequacy of household existence as compared to the life of renunciation is clearly recognized.

Time and again the texts tell us of some householder or householder's son who, after gaining faith in the Buddha, begins to reflect:

> The household life is confining, a path for the dust of passion. The going forth into homelessness is like open space. It is not easy for one living at home to lead the fully complete, fully purified holy life, bright as a conch shell.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Then, following such reflections through, he takes up the course to which they point:

> Sometime later, having abandoned his stock of possessions, great or small, having left his circle of relations, great or small, he cuts off his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robes, and goes forth from home into the homeless life.[2] (Wr. tr.).

For those inclined to the homeless life of renunciation, Buddhism offers a supporting communal structure in the form of the Bhikkhu-sangha, the order of monks. After leaving the household life, therefore, the aspiring meditator, if he is free from impediments, will generally seek admission into the order, taking first the lower ordination of "going forth" (*pabbajjā*) which makes him a *sāmaṇera* or novice, then the higher ordination (*upasampadā*) which makes him a bhikkhu, a fully ordained monk. The monastic life, with its emphasis on purity, simplicity, and seclusion, was especially designed by the Buddha to establish the optimal outward conditions for inner progress in the practice of his teaching. The foundation for this practice is the training in the higher moral discipline. The moral training for bhikkhus has been shaped into a scheme called the fourfold purification of morality (*catupārisuddhisīla*), made up of four components:

1. the moral discipline of restraint according to the Pātimokkha;
2. the moral discipline of sense restraint;
3. the moral discipline of purity of livelihood; and
4. the moral discipline concerning the use of the requisites.[3] These provide a neat compendium of monastic ethics and a base for meditation.

1. The moral discipline of restraint according to the Pātimokkha (*pātimokkhasaṃvara-sīla*) consists in scrupulous observance of the rules of the Pātimokkha, the code of training precepts promulgated by the Buddha to regulate the conduct of the bhikkhus. The Buddha describes this aspect of moral discipline thus:

---

1. DN. 1:60ff. MN. 1:179ff.

2. DN. 1:60ff. MN. 1:179ff.

3. For a detailed treatment of the fourfold purification of morality see Vism., pp. 13-37; PP., pp. 16-46.

> Here a bhikkhu dwells restrained with the Pātimokkha restraint, possessed of the [proper] conduct and resort, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, he trains himself by undertaking the precepts of training.[1]

The Pātimokkha contains 227 rules incumbent upon all who receive full ordination into the Order. The rules provide the backbone of discipline for the monks. Careful adherence to them serves as the foundation of purified conduct needed to ensure success in contemplation.[2]

2. The moral discipline of sense restraint (*indriyasaṃvarasīla*) means exercising restraint over the sense faculties in their reactions to their objective fields. The canonical text reads:

> On seeing a visible object with the eye, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty.[3]

The same is repeated for the remaining sense faculties and their objects. The purpose of this training is to prevent sense experience from occasioning the rise of the defilements. Because the untrained mind apprehends sense objects through the "signs" or false notions that they are intrinsically attractive and repulsive, agreeable sights, sounds, odors, tastes, touches, and ideas tend to arouse craving and attachment, disagreeable ones to arouse aversion and grief. To conquer this dualistic pattern of emotional involvement, so detrimental to the nascent pool of calm forming within his mind, it is necessary for the aspiring meditator to guard his senses carefully in their encounter with objects. By means of vigilant mindfulness he has to ward off the spontaneous impulses to cling to the pleasant and reject the unpleasant, replacing them with a detached equanimity which can look upon all sense objects equally.

3. The moral discipline of purified livelihood (*ājīvapārisuddhi sīla*) requires that the meditator avoid a wrong means of livelihood. For a bhikkhu this stricture has an even more exacting application than the right livelihood binding on the laity. A bhikkhu intent on purified livelihood has to obtain his basic requisites – robes, food, lodgings, and medicines – only in ways consistent with the principles of the monastic life. He can obtain them either as alms offerings freely given by the laity or by making requests on

---

1. PP., p. 16. "ldha bhikkhu pātimokkhasaṃvarasaṃvuto viharati, ācāragocarasampanno anumattesu vajjesu bhayadassāvī, samādāya sikkhati sikkhāpadesu." *Vibhaṅgapāli*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script], (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1958), p. 253 (hereafter cited as Vibh.).

2. A corresponding code of discipline containing about 350 rules was established for bhikkhunis, the original order of Buddhist nuns, but as the Bhikkhuni-sangha has become defunct this code no longer continues with its full force. However, there exist in Theravāda lands independently ordained nuns who do their best to live in accordance with the standards established by the original Pātimokkha for bhikkhunis.

3. PP., p. 16. "So cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimittaggāhī hoti nānubyañjanaggāhī, yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ – viharantaṃ abhijjhādomanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvassāveyyuṃ, tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ cakkhundriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati." MN. 1;l80.

invitation from faithful supporters. It is strictly forbidden for a bhikkhu to put forth false claims to spiritual achievement as a way of bolstering his prestige in the eyes of the laity. He must also avoid resorting to such methods as scheming, persuasion, hinting, belittling, and so forth as ways of gaining his means of subsistence.

4. The moral discipline concerning the use of the requisites (*paccayasannissitasīla*) follows naturally upon purified livelihood. After obtaining his requisites by righteous means, the bhikkhu is enjoined to use them mindfully, cognizant of the real purpose they serve in the framework of the holy life. To help him maintain this understanding, certain formulas appropriate to each of the four supports – robes, alms-food, lodgings, and medicine – are set down in the texts as subjects for reflection. The standard formulas for these reflections are as follows:

> Reflecting wisely, he uses the robe only for protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with gadflies, flies, wind, burning and creeping things, and only for the purpose of concealing the private parts. Reflecting wisely, he uses alms food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for smartening nor for embellishment, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for the ending of discomfort, and for assisting the life of purity: 'Thus I shall put a stop to old feelings and shall not arouse new feelings, and I shall be healthy and blameless and live in comfort.' Reflecting wisely, he uses the resting place only for the purpose of protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with gadflies, flies, wind, burning and creeping things, and only for the purpose of warding off the perils of climate and enjoying retreat. Reflecting wisely, he uses the requisite of medicine as cure for the sick only for protection from arisen hurtful feelings and for complete immunity from affliction.[1]

By using the requisites after making these reflections, the meditator can avoid the lure of craving for comfort and enjoyment. Recognizing the material supports of life to be subordinate in value to a spiritual goal, he is able to develop the virtues of contentment, frugality, and simplicity with regard to his physical requirements.

1. pp., p. 31. "Bhikkhu paṭisaṅkhā yoniso cīvaraṃ paṭisevati. Yāvad'eva sītassa paṭighātāya uṇhassa paṭighātāya ḍaṃsa makasa-vātātapa-siriṃsapa-samphassānaṃ paṭighātāya, yāvadeva hirikopīna-paṭicchādanatthaṃ. Paṭisaṃkhā yoniso piṇḍapātaṃ paṭisevati, n'eva davāya na madāya na maṇḍanāya na vibhūsanāya, yāvad'eva imassa kāyassa ṭhitiyā yāpanāya vihiṃsūparatiyā brahmacariyānuggahāya: iti purāṇañ ca vedanaṃ paṭihaṅkhāmi navañ ca vedanaṃ na uppādessāmi yātra ca me bhavissati anavajjatā ca phāsuvihāro cāti. Paṭisaṅkhā yoniso senāsanaṃ paṭisevati, yāvad'eva sītassa paṭighātāya uṇhassa paṭighātāya ḍaṃsamakasa-vātātapa-siriṃsapasamphassānaṃ paṭighātāya, yāvad'eva utuparissayavinodanaṃ paṭisallānārāmatthaṃ. Paṭisaṅkhā yoniso gilānapaccaya bhesajjaparikkhāraṃ paṭisevati, yāvad'eva uppannānaṃ veyyābādhikānaṃ vedanānaṃ paṭighātāya abyāpajjhaparamatāya." MN. 1:10.

Cutting off Impediments

After establishing a basis of purified morality, the aspirant is advised to sever any outer impediments (*palibodha*) he may have that can hinder his efforts to lead a contemplative life. The *Visuddhimagga* enumerates these impediments as ten: a dwelling, family, gain, a class, building, travel, kin, affliction, books, and supernormal powers.[1]

1. A dwelling can be a single room, a hut, or a whole monastery. It becomes an impediment for those who allow their mind to become excessively pre-occupied with work and business connected with the dwelling, or with the belongings they have stored there. Meditation requires the abandonment of concern with the comforts and conveniences of residential life. Thus a meditator who finds his progress impeded by attachment to his dwelling is urged to relinquish it, and to seek a simple, secluded place of shelter where he can pursue his practice.

2. A family means either relatives or supporters. A disciple who lives in close association with lay devotees develops emotional bonds which hinder his progress. He is therefore advised to develop detachment towards them or to shift to a location where intimate involvements are unlikely to arise.

3. Gains are the four requisites. A bhikkhu who achieves fame and distinction may be frequently sought after by lay people to receive offerings of the requisites. To thank them he must recite blessings and preach the doctrine, thus finding no chance to practice meditation. In such a case he should cut off this impediment by leaving his group and wandering to a place where he is unknown.

4. A class is a group of students. A bhikkhu constantly engaged in instructing students has no time to undertake the work of contemplation. If he is intent on full time meditation he should turn his students over to another teacher and go off by himself.

5. Building means new building work. This is always an impediment, since it demands time and mental consideration. To sever this impediment the building work should be completed as soon as possible or handed over to the community of monks.

6. Travel is going on journeys. This should be relinquished in favor of a stable residence conducive to meditation.

7. Kin means specifically close fellows in the Order, such as teachers and pupils, and close relations such as mother and father, who are afflicted with illness. They should be nursed back to health as quickly as possible, or their care turned over to responsible persons.

8. Affliction is any kind of illness, which should be dealt with by taking the appropriate medicines or, if these fail, by persisting in the practice despite the illness.

1. PP., p. 91. "*Āvāso*, *kulaṃ*, *lābho*, *gaṇo*, *kammaṃ*, *addhānaṃ*, *ñāti*, *ābādho*, *gantho*, *iddhi*." Vism., p. 73.

9. Books means the study of scriptures. This is an impediment for those who find the intellectual work of study obstructive to their meditation. It should be severed by leaving off study and recitation during the period of intensified practice.

10. Supernormal powers are an impediment to insight, not concentration, since they are the products of concentration. As an impediment they can be cut off simply by neglecting to exercise them and by abandoning concern for their success.

Approaching the Good Friend

The path of practice leading to the *jhānas* is an arduous course involving specific subjects of contemplation, precise techniques, and skillfulness in dealing with the pitfalls that lie along the way. The knowledge of how to attain the *jhānas* has been transmitted through a lineage of teachers going back to the time of the Buddha himself. Each teacher passes his store of accumulated knowledge and experience on to his successor pupils, thus ensuring the continuity of the tradition. A prospective meditator is advised to avail himself of the living heritage of practice by placing himself under the care of a qualified teacher. The teacher will assign him a subject of meditation appropriate for his temperament, instruct him in the methods of developing it, and guide his steps along the path.

Unlike other Indian traditions, which focus upon the guru figure as an embodiment of divinity or a link between the disciple and the divine, Theravāda Buddhism has always stressed the pedagogic role of the teacher. This much is indicated by the term selected in the Pāli texts to designate the teacher of meditation, *kalyāṇamitta*, meaning "good (or noble) friend." The teacher is not the path or an incarnation of the divine, equipped with the means to deliverance in his own person. He is essentially an elder friend and guide, who gives guidance along the path he has travelled based on his superior wisdom gained through personal experience. Even the Buddhas themselves can do no more than indicate the path; the rest depends on the efforts of the aspirant.

Nevertheless, the importance of relying on a *kalyāṇamitta* is strongly emphasized in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. When the Venerable Ānanda approached the Buddha and declared that it seemed to him that reliance on good friends is half of the holy life, the Buddha corrected him with the words that reliance on good friends is the whole of the holy life, for it is reliance on good friends that leads to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.[1] On another occasion, when his attendant Meghiya prematurely sought permission to go off into solitary retreat, the Buddha explained that while the mind is not yet ripe for liberation one thing that leads to its ripening is association with good friends and companions.[2] The Buddha in fact describes himself as the good friend par excellence who leads living beings to freedom from birth, aging, suffering, and death.[3]

1. SN. 1:88.

2. AN. 4:354-58.

3. SN. 1:88.

The good friend has the task of assigning the pupil a meditation subject. The *Visuddhimagga* points out that to do so the good friend must possess the proper qualifications, such as being worthy of reverence and esteem, uttering profound speech, and having solicitude for the welfare and progress of his disciples. It says that since the Buddha himself is the ideal good friend, while he is alive a meditation subject should be sought directly from him. But after the Buddha's passing the qualified meditation teachers that remain may be ranked in the following descending series: the great disciples that survive him, an arahat who attains *jhānas*, a non-returner, a once-returner, stream-enterer, an ordinary man who obtains *jhānas*, and various masters of the scriptures. After learning of a qualified teacher, the prospective meditator should approach him and take up residence in his monastery. He should not ask for a meditation subject immediately upon arriving, but should first perform the duties of a pupil towards the teacher, doing them with respect and humility. He should pay homage to the teacher in the evening and leave when dismissed. Then after ten days or two weeks have passed, he should create an opportunity to see the teacher. When all conditions are favorable, he can explain the reason for his coming. He should dedicate himself to the Buddha and to the teacher, then with a sincere inclination and resolution ask for a subject of meditation.[1]

The teacher assigns a meditation subject that is suitable for the disciple's temperament. The ancient teachers of the Theravāda tradition recognize six principal character types (*carita*) into which prospective meditators can be classified: These are: the greedy temperament, the hating temperament, the deluded temperament, the faithful temperament, the intelligent temperament, and the speculative temperament.[2] Which temperament prevails in a particular person is determined by previously accumulated *kamma*. On the basis either of the power of penetrating others' minds, or by personal observation, or by questioning, the teacher will size up the temperament of his new pupil; then he will select a meditation subject for him appropriate to his temperament.

The Subjects of Serenity-meditation

The various meditation subjects that the Buddha prescribed on different occasions for the development of serenity have been systematized in the commentaries into a set called the forty *kammaṭṭhānas*. The word *kammaṭṭhāna* means literally a place of work. It is applied to the subjects of meditation since these are the places where the meditator undertakes the work pertaining to his calling, the work of meditation. An equivalent term occurring in the texts in *ārammaṇa*, meaning "object" in general, but in this context the object focussed on in developing concentration.

---

1. PP., p. 100. Vism., p. 80.

2. PP., p. 102. "*Rāgacarito*, *dosacarito*, *mohacarito*, *saddhācarito*, *buddhicarito*, *vitakkacarito*." Vism., p. 82.

The forty meditation subjects are distributed into seven categories. They are enumerated in the *Visuddhimagga* as follows: ten *kasiṇas*, ten kinds of foulness, ten recollections, four divine abidings, four immaterial states, one perception, and one defining.[1]

A *kasiṇa* is a device representing a particular quality used as a support for concentration. The ten *kasiṇas* are the earth *kasiṇa*, water *kasiṇa*, fire *kasiṇa*, wind *kasiṇa*, blue *kasiṇa*, yellow *kasiṇa*, red *kasiṇa*, white *kasiṇa*, light *kasiṇa*, and limited space *kasiṇa*. The word *kasiṇa* has the meaning of "entirety" (*sakalaṭṭhena*). It is extended to these ten objects of meditation in that each represents the entire quality appropriate to itself. As used in the manuals of meditation, a *kasiṇa* can signify any of three items: first the *maṇḍala*, the circle or other physical object used as the initial subject of concentration; second the *nimitta*, the mental image of the object obtained from repeated contemplation of the device; and third the *jhāna* that arises from meditation on the *nimitta*. Here *kasiṇa* is used to indicate principally the physical basis for concentration. This can be either a naturally occuring form of the element or color chosen, or an artificially produced device such as a colored or elemental disk that the meditator can use at his convenience in his meditation quarters.

The ten kinds of foulness are ten stages in the decomposition of a corpse. These are: the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut-up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested, and a skeleton. The primary purpose behind these meditations is to reduce sensual lust by gaining a clear perception of the repulsiveness of the body. In order to gain the "sign" of the corpses, actual dead bodies have to be seen. Thence these subjects are also known as the cemetery meditations.

The ten recollections are: the recollections of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, morality, generosity, and the deities, mindfulness of death, mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of breathing, and the recollection of peace. The first three are devotional contemplations on the sublime qualities of the "three jewels", the primary objects of Buddhist veneration. The second three are reflections on two cardinal Buddhist virtues and on the devas inhabiting the heavenly worlds, intended principally for those still intent on a higher rebirth. Mindfulness of death is reflection on the inevitability of death, a constant spur to spiritual exertion. Mindfulness of the body involves the mental dissection of the body into thirty-two parts, undertaken with a view to perceiving its unattractiveness. Mindfulness of breathing is awareness of the in-and-out movement of the breath, perhaps the most fundamental of all Buddhist meditation subjects. And the recollection of peace is reflection on the qualities of *nibbāna*.

The four divine abidings are the development of boundless loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These meditations are also called the "immeasurables" (*appamaññā*) because they are to be developed towards all sentient beings without qualification or exclusiveness.

---

1. PP., p. 112. Vism., p. 89. The Pāli names for the forty *kammaṭṭhānas* are given in the Appendix 2.

The four immaterial states are the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception. These are the objects leading to the four corresponding meditative attainments called the imaterial *jhānas* (*arūpajjhāna*), immaterial deliverances (*āruppā vimokkhā*) or immaterial attainments (*arūpasamāpatti*).

The one perception is the perception of the repulsiveness of food. The one defining is the defining of the four elements, that is, the analysis of the physical body into the elemental modes of solidity, fluidity, heat, and oscillation.

The forty *kammaṭṭhānas* are treated in the Pāli commentarial texts from two important angles – one their ability to induce different levels of concentration, the other their suitability for different temperaments.

Not all meditation subjects are equally effective in inducing the deeper levels of concentration. As we explained above, beyond the preliminary stage of initial concentration (*parikammasamādhi*) concentration can occur either at the level of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) or at the level of absorption concentration (*appaṇāsamādhi*), depending upon the strength of the *jhāna* factors in the meditative state. Absorption too, consisting in the eight attainments – the four lower *jhānas* and the four *āruppas* – can occur at the different levels corresponding to these eight attainments. Therefore the forty *kammaṭṭhānas* are first distinguished on the basis of their capacity for inducing only access or for inducing full absorption as well; then those able to induce absorption are distinguished further according to their ability to induce the different levels of *jhāna*.

Of the forty subjects, ten are capable of leading only to access concentration. These are eight recollections – i.e., those excepting mindfulness of the body and mindfulness of breathing – plus the perception of repulsiveness in nutriment and the defining of the four elements. Cultivation of these subjects can cause the hindrances to subside and the *jhāna* factors to become manifest. However, because they are occupied with a diversity of qualities and involve an active application of discursive thought they cannot lead concentration beyond the stage of access. The other thirty subjects can all lead to absorption.

Of these latter, the ten *kasiṇas* and mindfulness of breathing bring all four *jhānas* their efficiency in this regard due apparently to their simplicity and freedom from thought construction. The ten kinds of foulness and mindfulness of the body bring only the first *jhāna*, being limited because consciousness can only hold onto them with the aid of applied thought (*vitakka*), which is absent in the second and higher *jhānas*. The first three divine abidings can induce the lower three *jhānas* but not the fourth, since they arise in association with pleasant feeling (*sukha*), present in the first three *jhānas* but replaced by neutral feeling in the fourth. Conversely, because it requires the company of neutral feeling and cannot coexist with pleasant feeling, the divine abiding of equanimity occurs only at the level of the fourth *jhāna*, where neutral feeling gains ascendency. The four immaterial states conduce to the respective immaterial *jhānas* corresponding to their names; but because these latter are identical in factorial

constitution with the fourth *jhāna*, differing only in their objects, the four immaterial states are said to lead to the fourth *jhāna*.

Since in the main section of the present work we wish to follow the progress of meditation through all four *jhānas*, we will presume the case of a meditator who has taken as his meditation-subject either a *kasiṇa* or mindfulness of breathing.

The forty *kammaṭṭhānas* are also differentiated according to their appropriateness for different character types. The principal temperaments recognized for this purpose are, as we said, six – the greedy, the hating, the deluded, the faithful, the intelligent, and the speculative. The danger of oversimplification involved in this scheme has been acknowledged by ancient teachers, and the possibility of complex combinations of traits finds ready affirmation. But the sixfold typology is taken to be sufficient as a pragmatic guideline for the purpose it is intended to serve, the assignment of a suitable subject to a meditator.

The *Visuddhimagga* divides the forty *kammaṭṭhānas* among the different temperaments as follows. The ten kinds of foulness and mindfulness of the body, clearly intended to attenuate sensual desire, are eleven subjects suitable for those of greedy temperament. Eight subjects, the four divine abidings and four color *kasiṇas*, are appropriate for the hating temperament.[1] Mindfulness of breathing is one recollection suitable for those of the deluded and the speculative temperaments. The first six recollections are appropriate for the faithful temperament. Four subjects – mindfulness of death, the recollection of peace, the defining of the four elements, and the perception of repulsiveness in nutriment – are especially effective for those of intelligent temperament. The remaining six *kasiṇas* and the immaterial states are suitable for all kinds of temperaments. But the *kasiṇas* should be limited in size for one of speculative temperament and large in size for one of deluded temperament.[2]

Immediately after giving this breakdown Buddhaghosa adds a proviso to prevent misunderstanding. He states that this division by way of temperament is made on the basis of direct opposition and complete suitability, but actually there is no wholesome form of meditation that does not suppress the defilements and cultivate virtuous mental factors. He then cites a passage from the Meghiya Sutta advising a single meditator to meditate on foulness to abandon lust, on loving kindness to abandon hatred, on breathing to cut off discursive thought, and on impermanence to eliminate the conceit "I am".[3]

---

1. Exactly why the color *kasiṇas* are offered as an antidote to hatred is not explained. Perhaps the contemplation of color has a subtle psychological effect of reducing anger and aversion.

2. PP., pp. 117-18. Vism., p. 92-93.

3. PP., p. 118. AN. 4:358.

Choosing a Suitable Dwelling

The teacher assigns a meditation subject to his pupil appropriate to his character, and then explains the methods of developing it. He can teach it gradually to a pupil who is going to remain in close proximity to him, or in detail to one who will go to practice it elsewhere. If the disciple is not going to stay with his teacher he must be careful to select a suitable place for meditation. The *Visuddhimagga* mentions eighteen kinds of monasteries unfavorable to the development of *jhāna*: a large monastery, a new one, a dilapidated one, one near a road, one with a pond, leaves, flowers, or fruits, one sought after by many people, one in cities, among timber or fields, where people quarrel, in a port, in border lands, on a frontier, a haunted place, and one without access to a spiritual teacher.[1] Unless he is already highly developed a novice meditator should avoid a dwelling with these faults.

The factors which make a dwelling favorable to meditation are mentioned by the Buddha himself. These are five in number:

1. it should be not too far from or too near a village that can be relied on as an alms resort, and should have a clear path;
2. it should be quiet and secluded;
3. it should be free from inclemencies of weather and from harmful insects and animals;
4. it should be easy to obtain the four requisites while dwelling there; and
5. the dwelling should provide ready access to learned elders and spiritual friends who can be consulted when problems arise in meditation.[2] The types of dwelling places commended by the Buddha most frequently in the suttas as conducive to the *jhānas* are a secluded dwelling in the forest, at the foot of a tree, on a mountain, in a cleft, in a cave, in a cemetery, on a wooded flatland, in the open air, or on a heap of straw.[3] Having found a suitable dwelling and settled there, the disciple should maintain scrupulous observance of the rules of discipline. He should be content with his simple requisites, exercise control over his sense faculties, be mindful and discerning in all activities and practice meditation diligently as he was instructed. It is at this point that he meets the first great challenge of his contemplative life, the battle with the five hindrances.

1. PP., p. 125. Vism., p. 99.

2. PP., pp. 125-26. AN. 5:15.

3. MN. 1:181, 269, 274.

Chapter Three

THE CONQUEST OF THE HINDRANCES

In the suttas the Buddha expounds the *jhānas* in a fourfold scheme, the members of which are called the first, second, third, and fourth *jhāna*. The qualified monk, after fulfilling the preliminary requirements and going off into solitude, passes in turn first from ordinary consciousness into the first *jhāna*, and then from the first *jhāna* into each of the succeeding *jhānas* culminating in the fourth. The attainment of any *jhāna* comes about through a two-sided process of development. On one side is the elimination of the factors obstructive to attaining the *jhāna*, on the other the acquisition of the factors producing its attainment. The former set is called its factors of abandonment (*pahānaṅgāni*), the latter its factors of possession (*samannāgataṅgāni*). In the case of the first *jhāna* the factors of abandonment are the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*) and its factors of possession the basic five *jhāna* factors (*pañcajhānaṅgāni*). Both sets are spelled out in a passage ascribed to the venerable Sāriputta, the Buddha's chief disciple:

> Your reverence, in regard to the first meditation, five factors are abandoned, five are possessed: if a monk has entered on the first meditation, desire for sense pleasure is abandoned, malevolence is abandoned, sloth and torpor are abandoned, restlessness and worry are abandoned, and doubt is abandoned, but there is initial thought and discursive thought, rapture and joy and one-pointedness of mind. Thus, your reverence, in regard to the first meditation, five factors are abandoned, five factors are possessed.[1]

In this chapter we will focus upon the five hindrances, leaving a detailed consideration of the *jhāna* factors to the next chapter. The five hindrances comprise sensual desire (*kamācchanda*), ill will, (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*). This group of five merits special attention because it is the principal classification the Buddha uses for the obstacles to meditative development. The defilements included in this group obstruct not only the first *jhāna*, but the entire thrust of man's aspiration for the purification and liberation of his mind. They stand like a wall between man's sensual and self directed thought-patterns and his drive towards higher development, preventing progress in the spheres of both serenity and insight.

1. I. B. Horner, trans. and ed., *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*. [Vol. 1: *The First Fifty Discourses* (*mūlapaṇṇāsa*); vol. 2: *The Middle Fifty Discourses* (*majjhimapaṇṇāsa*); vol. 3: *The Final Fifty Discourses* (*uparipaṇṇāsa*)]. (Pali Text Society [Translation Series nos. 29-31]. 3 vols. 1954-59; Reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1970). 1:354-55 (hereafter cited as MLS.). "Paṭhamaṃ kho āvuso jhānaṃ pañcaṅgavippahīnaṃ pañcaṅgasamannāgataṃ: Idh'āvuso paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ samāpannassa bhikkhuno kāmacchando pahīno hoti, byāpādo pahīno hoti, thīnamiddhaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti, uddhacakukkuccaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti, vicikicchā pahīnā hoti. Vitakko ca vattati, vicāro ca pīti ca sukhaṃ ca cittekaggatā ca. Paṭhamaṃ kho āvuso jhānaṃ evaṃ pañcaṅgavippahīnaṃ pañcaṅgasamannāgataṃ'ti." MN. 1:294-95.

We will begin this chapter with a look at the standard canonical description for the attainment of the first *jhāna*, which opens with an allusion to the hindrances. Then we will give a general overview of the five hindrances followed by a more specific account of each hindrance in turn. From here we will go on to examine the abandonment of the hindrances. This discussion will focus on the Buddha's systematic approach to the conquest of the hindrances, which views these defilements as originating from particular conditions and to be abandoned by the elimination of their conditions.

The Entrance to the Jhāna

The Buddha describes the attainment of the first *jhāna* with a standard formula recurring throughout the Pāli Canon. The formula runs as follows:

> Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states of mind, he enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought with rapture and happiness born of seclusion.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Examination of the formula reveals that it divides into two parts, one indicating the states which must be eliminated to attain the first *jhāna*, the other the states which accompany and define the *jhāna* itself. The elimination of obstructive states is covered by the expression "quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states of mind" (*vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* and the *Visuddhimagga* comment upon these expressions in almost identical terms, seeking to relate them to the five hindrances. The commentaries view the phrases "sense pleasures" and "unwholesome states" as an implicit reference to the hindrances, a quite legitimate position since the Buddha has often stressed the need to overcome the hindrances in order to enter the first *jhāna*.

Basing themselves upon the Niddesa and Vibhaṅga[2] the commentaries allow a twofold interpretation of "sense pleasures" (*kāmehi*). They can be understood in the present context either as objective sense pleasures (*vatthukāma*), i.e. enticing sense objects which arouse the desire for sensual enjoyment, or as the defilement of sense pleasures (*kilesakāma*), i.e. the subjective desire for sensual enjoyment itself. According to the commentator the phrase "quite secluded from sense pleasures" serves to show that to attain the first *jhāna* the yogin must remove himself from sense pleasures, the first hindrance and its objective basis. The need for such separation is dictated by two considerations: first by the fact that sense pleasures are the "enemy" or contrary opposite of the first *jhāna*, which cannot exist in their presence "just as lamplight cannot exist as long as darkness exists"; and second by the fact that sense pleasures have to be

---

1. "Vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ piṭisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." MN. 1:89. Vibh., p. 245.

2. *Mahā Niddesapāli*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script], (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960), pp. 1-2 (hereafter cited as Nd.). Vibh., p. 256. PP., l46. Vism., p. 113.

relinquished to reach the first *jhāna* "just as the near bank must be relinquished to reach the further bank."[1]

If sense pleasures are understood objectively, then the phrase "unwholesome states" (*akusalādhamma*) is interpreted to mean all unwholesome states, inclusive of sensual desire. In such a case "seclusion from sense pleasures" will signify bodily seclusion (*kāyaviveka*), physical aloofness from contact with sensually provocative objects, and "seclusion from unwholesome states" will signify mental seclusion (*cittaviveka*), mental aloofness from obsession by defilements.[2] On the other hand, if sense pleasures are understood subjectively, they will be equated specifically with one hindrance, the hindrance of sensual desire; the unwholesome states will then be equated with all five hindrances, including sensual desire insofar as it, too, is unwholesome. But to avoid redundancy, the commentary says that when the first phrase is taken to indicate the hindrance of sensual desire, the second should be taken to indicate the remaining four hindrances. In both cases "seclusion" signifies mental seclusion through suppression of the defilements; the use of the plural, *kāmehi* and *dhammehi*, suggests the plurality of forms either class of obsessions can assume.[3]

The Five Hindrances: General Account

The five defilements which the Buddha designates as the five hindrances are, as we mentioned, sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. These five receive the name "hindrances" for the reason that they hinder and envelop the mind.[4]

They hinder and envelop the mind by obstructing the development of meditation in either of its two modes – the mode of serenity (*samatha bhāvanā*) and the mode of insight (*vipassanā bhāvanā*). Hence the Buddha calls the five hindrances "obstructions, hindrances, corruptions of the mind, weakeners of wisdom."[5] Again he says: "These five

---

1. PP., p. 145. "Andhakāre sati padīpobhāso viya, tesaṃ pariccāgeneva c'assa adhigamo hoti, orimatīrapariccāgena parimatīrasseva." Vism., p. 113.

2. PP., pp. 145-46. Vism., pp. 83-84.

3. PP., p. 147. Vism., p. 114.

4. "Cittaṃ nīvarenti pariyonandhantī ti nīvararanā." *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* [Pāli Text in Burmese script] (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960), p. 91 (hereafter cited as Dhs.A.).

5. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, and F. L. Woodward, trans. *The Book of the Kindred Sayings* (*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*) *or Grouped Suttas*. [Pt. 1: *Kindred Sayings with verses* (*Sagatha-Vagga*), translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids assisted by Sūriyagoda Sumaṅgala Thera; pt. 2: *The Nidāna Book* (*Nidāna-Vagga*), translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids assisted by F. L. Woodward; pt. 3: translated by F. L. Woodward and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids; pt. 4: translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; pt. 5. (*Mahā-Vagga*), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids. (Pali Text Society Translation Series, vols. 7, 10, 13-15]. 5 vols. 1927-30; reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1956-71), 5:79 (hereafter cited as KS.). "Āvaraṇā nīvaraṇā cetaso upakkilesā paññāya dubbalīkaraṇā." SN. 5:94.

hindrances, monks, are causes of blindness, causes of loss of vision, causes of unknowing, opposed to wisdom, aligned with vexation, leading away from *nibbāna*."[1]

In the suttas the Buddha offers two sets of similes to illustrate the detrimental effect of the hindrances. The first compares the five hindrances unabandoned in oneself to five types of calamity: sensual desire is like a debt, ill will like a disease, sloth and torpor like imprisonment, restlessness and worry like slavery, and doubt like being lost on a desert road. Release from the hindrances is to be seen as freedom from debt, good health, release from prison, emancipation from slavery, and arriving at a place of safety.[2] The second set of similes compares the hindrances to five kinds of impurities affecting a bowl of water, preventing a keen-sighted man from seeing his own reflection as it really is. The five impurities are appropriately paired off with the hindrances: sensual desire is like a bowl of water mixed with brightly colored paints, ill will like a bowl of boiling water, sloth and torpor like water covered by mossy plants, restlessness and worry like water blown into ripples by the wind, and doubt like muddy water.[3] Just as the keen-eyed man would not be able to see his reflection in these five kinds of water, so

> when one dwells with his mind obsessed and overwhelmed by sensual desire (ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt), without understanding as it is the escape from these arisen obsessions, then one does not know and see as it is one's own good, the good of others, or the good of both.[4] (Wr. tr.).

Because the five hindrances are the states especially obstructive to the first *jhāna* they are called the first *jhāna*'s "factors of abandoning" (*pahānaṅgāni*). The factors of abandonment are the states which have to be abandoned in order for the *jhāna* to arise.[5] But the singling out of these five factors should not be taken to imply that they are the only states antithetical to the first *jhāna* or the only defilements abandoned when the *jhāna* is attained. To forestall this suspicion Buddhaghosa points out, in his exegesis of the first *jhāna* formula, that the two phrases "secluded from sense pleasures" (*vivicc'eva kāmehi*) and "secluded from unwholesome states of mind" (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*) cover other categories of defilements besides the hindrances. Of the three unwholesome roots (*akusalamūla*), the first covers greed, the second hatred and delusion. Of the floods (*ogha*), bonds (*yoga*), cankers (*āsava*), clingings (*upādāna*), bodily ties (*gantha*), and fetters (*saṃyojana*), the first phrase covers the flood, bond, canker, and clinging of sensual desire, the bodily tie of covetousness, and the fetter of sensual desire; the second phrase covers the remaining members of these groups.

1. KS. 5:91. "Pañcime bhikkhave nīvaraṇā andhakaraṇā acakkhukaraṇā aññāṇakaraṇā paññānirodhikā vighātapakkhiyā anibbānasaṃvattanikā." SN. 5:97.

2. DN. 1:71-73.

3. SN. 5:121-24.

4. "Yasmim samaye kāmarāgapariyuṭṭhitena cetasā viharati kāmarāgaparetena. Uppannassa ca kāmarāgassa nissaraṇaṃ yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti, attatthaṃ pi tasmiṃ samaye yathābhūtaṃ na jānāti na passati. Paratthaṃ pi, ubhayatthaṃ pi tasmiṃ samaye yathābhūtaṃ na jānāti na passati." SN. 5:121-22.

5. PP., p. 152. Vism., p. 118.

Among the unwholesome states of consciousness mentioned in the Abhidhamma, the first phrase indicates the eight classes of consciousness rooted in greed, the second the remaining four classes of unwholesome cousciousness – those rooted in aversion and strong delusion.[1]

Nevertheless, despite this diversity of defilements opposed to the first *jhāna*, the five hindrances alone are called its factors of abandoning. The principal reason behind this selection, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, is that "although other unprofitable things too are abandoned at the moment of *jhāna*, still only these are specifically obstructive to *jhāna*."[2] Buddhaghosa goes on to show how each hindrance impedes the mind's capacity for concentration:

> The mind affected through lust by greed for varied objective fields does not become concentrated on an object consisting in unity, or being overwhelmed by lust, it does not enter on the way to abandoning the sense-desire element. When pestered by ill will towards an object, it does not occur uninterruptedly. When overcome by stiffness and torpor, it is unwieldy. When seized by agitation and worry, it is unquiet and buzzes about. When stricken by uncertainty, it fails to mount the way to accomplish the attainment of jhāna. So it is these only that are called factors of abandoning because they are specifically obstructive to jhāna.[3]

A second reason for confining the first *jhāna*'s factors of abandoning to the five hindrances is to permit a direct alignment to be made between the hindrances and the *jhāna* factors (*jhānaṅgāni*). The *jhāna* factors are five mental phenomena which strengthen concentration and lift the mind to the level of *jhāna*. The five are applied thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). Since the five remain in the first *jhāna* they come to be called its "factors of possession" (*samannāgataṅgāni*). Buddhaghosa states that the abandonment of the five hindrances alone is mentioned in connection with *jhāna* for the reason that the hindrances are the direct enemies of the five factors:

> Only the hindrances are mentioned subsequently in the Vibhaṅga… in order to show their opposition to, and incompatibility with, the jhāna factors. For the hindrances are the contrary opposites of the jhāna factors: what is meant is

1. PP., p. 147. Vism., p. 114.

2. PP., p. 152. Vism., p. 118.

3. PP., p. 152. "Kāmacchandena hi nānāvisayapalobhitaṃ cittaṃ na ekattārammaṇe samādhiyati; kāmacchandābhibhūtaṃ vataṃ na kāmadhātuppahānāya paṭipadaṃ paṭipajjati; byāpādena c'ārammaṇe paṭihaññamānaṃ na nirantaraṃ pavattati; thīnamiddhābhibhūtaṃ akammaññaṃ hoti; uddhaccakukkuccaparetaṃ avūpasantaṃ eva hutvā paribbhamati; vicikicchāya upahataṃ jhānādhigama sādhikaṃ paṭipadaṃ narohati. Iti visesena jhānantarāyakarattā etān'eva pahānaṅgānī ti vuttāni." Vism., p. 118.

> that the jhāna factors are incompatible with them, eliminate them, abolish them.[1]

To support his contention the commentator cites a passage he ascribes to the Peṭaka demonstrating a one-to-one correspondence between the *jhāna* factors and hindrances:

> Concentration is incompatible with lust, happiness [rapture] with ill will, applied thought with stiffness and torpor, bliss [happiness] with agitation and worry, and sustained thought with uncertainty [doubt].[2]

Thus each *jhāna* factor is seen as being assigned the specific task of eliminating and abolishing a particular obstruction to the *jhāna*. To correlate these obstructions with the five *jhāna* factors they are ordered into a scheme of five hindrances.

The same principle also serves to explain the rationale behind the coupling that takes place in two of the hindrances, "sloth and torpor" and "restlessness and worry." In an important passage which anticipates the analytical precision of the Abhidhamma the Buddha demonstrates a method by which the five hindrances become tenfold. This is done by dividing three hindrances into two each according to whether they take internal or external objects, and the two compound hindrances into two each by way of their pairs of components:

> What, monks, is the method of explanation according to which the five hindrances become ten?
>
> Sensual desire towards the internal, monks – that is a hindrance; sensual desire towards the external – that is a hindrance. Thus the hindrance of sensual desire that comes down in the summary by this method becomes twofold.
>
> Ill will towards the internal, monks – that is a hindrance; ill will towards the external – that is a hindrance. Thus the hindrance of ill will that comes down in the summary by this method becomes twofold.
>
> Sloth, monks, is a hindrance; torpor is a hindrance. Thus the hindrance of sloth and torpor that comes down in the summary by this method becomes twofold.
>
> Restlessness, monks, is a hindrance; worry is a hindrance. Thus the hindrance of restlessness and worry that comes down in the summary by this method becomes twofold.

---

1. PP., p. 147. "Vibhaṅge upari jhānaṅgānaṃ paccanika-paṭipakkha-bhāvadassanato nīvaraṇā'eva vuttāni. Nīvaraṇāni hi jhānaṅgapaccani-kāni; tesaṃ jhānaṅgān'eva paṭipakkhāni viddhaṃsakāni vighātakānī ti vuttaṃ hoti." Vism., p. 114.

2. PP., p. 147. "Samādhi kāmacchandassa paṭipakkho, pīti byāpādassa, vitakko thīnamiddhassa, sukhaṃ uddhaccakukkuccassa, vicāro vicikicchāya ti [ ] Peṭake vuttā." Vism., p. 114.

N.B. *The Path of Purification*'s "happiness" is our "rapture" (*pīti*), and *The Path of Purification*'s "bliss" is our "happiness" (*sukha*). The other differences in translation are more obvious, and can be checked in Appendix 3.

> Doubt towards internal phenomena, monks, is a hindrance; doubt towards externals is a hindrance. Thus the hindrance of doubt that comes down in the summary by this method becomes twofold.
>
> This, monks, is the method of explanation according to which the five hindrances are ten.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Thus when analyzed into distinct mental factors (*cetasika*) the five hindrances break down into seven separate states: sensual desire, ill will, sloth, torpor, restlessness, worry, and doubt. This raises the question why the seven defilements obstructive to the first *jhāna* are presented as only five hindrances rather than as seven. The reason for this peculiarity of arrangement again seems to lie in the economy required to set the *jhāna*-factors and hindrances in direct opposition. Since there are five *jhāna* factors the defilements they oppose must likewise be five. Sloth and torpor on the one side, and restlessness and worry on the other, readily lend themselves to the required coupling. For sloth and torpor share the common feature of mental ailment or indisposition, the former of consciousness itself and the latter of its concomitants.[2] Restlessness and worry, likewise, share the common feature of agitating or disturbing the mind. Thus it is natural that a single *jhāna* factor should be capable of opposing and silencing the two hindrances in each set. According to the method cited in the *Visuddhimagga*, sloth and torpor are both countered by applied thought, restlessness and worry are both countered by happiness.[3] In this way the mutual exclusion of hindrances and *jhāna* factors becomes the ground for the grouping of the hindrances into a fivefold set.

---

1. "Katamo, ca bhikkhave pariyāyo yaṃ pariyāyaṃ āgamma pañca nīvaraṇā dasa honti?

Yad api bhikkhave ajjhattaṃ kāmacchando tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Yad api bahiddhā kāmacchando tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Kāmacchandanīvaraṇaṃ ti iti hidaṃ uddesaṃ āgacchati, tadaminā petaṃ pariyāyena dvayaṃ hoti.

Yad api bhikkhave ajjhattaṃ byāpādo tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Yad api bahiddhā byāpādo tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Byāpādanīvaranaṃ ti iti hidaṃ uddesaṃ āgacchati. Tad aminā petaṃ pariyāyena dvayaṃ hoti.

Yad api bhikkhave thīnaṃ tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Yad api middhaṃ tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Thīnamiddhanīvaraṇaṃ ti iti hidaṃ uddesaṃ āgacchati. Tad aminā petaṃ pariyāyena dvayaṃ hoti.

Yad api bhikkhave uddhaccaṃ tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Yad api kukkuccaṃ tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Uddhacca kukkucca nīvaraṇanti iti hidaṃ uddesaṃ āgacchati. Tad aminā petaṃ pariyāyena dvayaṃ hoti.

Yad api bhikkhave ajjhattaṃ dhammesu vicikicchā tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Yad api bahiddhā dhammesu vicikicchā tad api nīvaraṇaṃ. Vicikicchānīvaraṇaṃ ti iti hidaṃ uddesaṃ āgacchati. Tad aminā petaṃ pariyāyena dvayaṃ hoti.

Ayaṃ kho bhikkhave pariyāyo yaṃ pariyāyaṃ āgamma pañca nīvaraṇā dasa honti." SN. 5:110.

2. "Thīnaṃ citta gelaññaṃ, middhaṃ cetasikagelaññaṃ." Buddhaghosa, (*Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*)]. [Vol. 1:] *Sīlakkhandhavaggaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 2:] *Mahāvaggaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 3:] *Pāthikavaggaṭṭhakathā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1968), 1:189 (hereafter cited as DN.A.).

3. PP., p. 147. Vism., p. 114.

The Five Hindrances: Specific Account

***Sensual Desire* (kāmacchanda)**

The hindrance of sensual desire is desire for sense pleasures, "sense pleasures" (*kāma*) here being equated with the "five strands of sense pleasures (*pañca kāmaguṇā*).[1] The five strands of sense pleasure are visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangibles which are "desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensuous, stimulating lust."[2] (Wr. tr.). Desire for sense pleasures appears in the suttas under a variety of names. The Dhamma-saṅgaṇi, the first book of the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, collects together all these names in its definition of the hindrance of sensual desire:

> That sensual desire, sensual passion, sensual delight, sensual craving, sensual fondness, sensual fever, sensual languishing, sensual rapacity which is excited by the pleasure of the senses – this is called the hindrance of sensual desire.[3]

This first hindrance thus coincides in meaning with the canker (*āsava*), flood (*ogha*), and bond (*yoga*) of sensuality, with the fetter of sensual lust (*kāmarāgasaṃyojana*), and with the clinging to sense pleasures (*kāmūpādāna*). Sensual desire is a form of the root-defilement of greed (*lobha*). The *Visuddhimagga* explains greed in terms of the four defining categories commonly found in the commentaries – characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause – with an illustration given as a fifth:

> Greed has the characteristic of grasping an object, like birdlime (lit. 'monkey lime'). Its function is sticking, like meat put in a hot pan. It is manifested as not giving up, like the dye of lampblack. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage. Swelling with the current of craving, it should be regarded as taking [beings] with it to states of loss, as a swift-flowing river does to the great ocean.[4]

Sensual desire is distinct in nature from other types of desire. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* differentiates it from the desire to accomplish some aim (*kattukamyatā*) as well as from the desire for Dhamma (*dhammacchanda*).[5] As a form of greed the first is

---

1. Dhs.A., p. 402.

2. "Iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmupasaṃhitā rajanīyā." MN. 1:85.

3. Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, trans. *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics of the Fourth Century B. C. Being a translation*, *Now made for the First Time from the Original Pali of the First Book in the Abhidhamma Pitaka entitled Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi* (*Compendium of States of Phenomena*) *with Introductory Essay and Notes*, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, vol. 12, (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1900), pp. 292-93 (hereafter cited as Psy.Ethics). "Yo kāmesu kāmacchando, kāmarāgo, kāmanandi, kāma taṇhā, kāmasineho, kāma pariḷāho, kāma mucchā, kāmajjhosanā, idaṃ vuccati kāmacchandanivaraṇaṃ." Dhs., p. 232.

4. PP., pp. 529-30. "Lobho ārammaṇagahaṇalakkhaṇo, makkaṭālepo viya; abhisaṅgaraso, taṭṭakapāle khittamaṅsapesi viya; apariccāgapaccupaṭṭhāno, telañjanarāgo viya; saṅyojanīyadhammesu assādadassanapadaṭṭhāno; taṇhānadībhāvena vaḍḍhamāno, sīghasotā nadī iva mahāsamuddaṃ, apāyaṃ eva gahetvā gacchattī ti daṭṭhabbo." Vism., p. 396.

5. Dhs.A., p. 402.

invariably unwholesome, the second can assume both wholesome and unwholesome forms, the last is exclusively wholesome.

Ill will **(byāpāda)**

Ill will is used in the suttas as an equivalent for hatred (*dosa*) and aversion (*paṭigha*). All three signify resentment directed towards disagreeable persons or objects. Like the other defilements, ill will can either remain inwardly contained or can express itself outwardly. In the latter form it motivates actions such as killing, harsh speech, outbreaks of violence, etc. Thus we find that in the Potaliya Sutta the word *nivaraṇa* is given an extended meaning capable of covering the actions manifesting the internal hindrance: "This is indeed a fetter, this is a hindrance, that is to say onslaught on creatures… slanderous speech… angry fault-finding… wrathful rage."[1] Such actions become fetters and hindrances because they stir into activity the fetter and hindrance of ill will, reinforcing its detrimental influence upon moral and spiritual development.

The Dhammasaṅgaṇi defines the hindrance of ill will in its usual way by bringing together its numerous canonical synonyms:

> What is the hindrance of ill will? When annoyance springs up at the thought: 'He has done me harm, is doing, will do me harm; he has done harm, is doing harm, will do harm to someone dear and precious to me; he has conferred a benefit, is conferring, will confer a benefit on someone I dislike and object to; or when annoyance springs up groundlessly: all such vexation, indignation, hate, antipathy, abhorrence, mental disorder, detestation, anger, fuming, irascibility, hate, hating, hatred, disorder, getting upset, derangement, opposition, hostility, churlishness, abruptness, disgust of heart – this is called the hindrance of ill will.[2]

The *Visuddhimagga* explains hatred thus:

> It has the characteristic of savageness, like a provoked snake. Its function is to spread, like a drop of poison, or its function is to burn up its own support, like a forest fire. It is manifested as persecuting (*dusana*), like an enemy who has got his chance. Its proximate cause is the grounds for annoyance.[3]

---

1. MLS. 2:27. "Etadeva kho pana saṃyojanaṃ etaṃ nīvaraṇaṃ yadidaṃ pāṇātipāto… nindāroso… kodhūpāyāso…" MN. 1:361-64.

2. *Psy. Ethics*, pp. 282-83. "Tattha katamaṃ byāpādanīvaraṇaṃ? 'Anatthaṃ me akarī'ti āghāto jāyati. 'Anatthaṃ me caratī'ti āghāto jāyati. 'Anatthaṃ me carissatī'ti āghāto jāyati. 'Piyassa me manāpassa anatthaṃ acarī'ti…, anatthaṃ caratī…, anatthaṃ carissatī' ti āgāto jāyati. 'Appiyassa me amanāpassa atthaṃ acari…, atthaṃ carati…, atthaṃ carissati'ti āghāto jāyati. Aṭṭhāne vā pana āghāto jāyati. Yo evarūpo cittassa āghāto paṭighāto paṭighaṃ paṭivirodho, kopo, pakopo. saṃpakopo, doso, padoso, sampadoso, cittassa byāpatti, manopadoso, kodho, kujjanā, kujjitattaṃ, doso, dussanā, dussitattaṃ, byāpatti, byāpajjanā, byāpajjitattaṃ, virodho, paṭivirodho, caṇdikkaṃ, asuropo, anattamanatā cittassa-idaṃ vuccati byāpādanīvaraṇaṃ." Dhs., p. 232.

3. PP., p. 532. "So caṇḍikkalakkhaṇo pahaṭāsiviso viya, visappanaraso visanipāto viya, attano nissaya-dahanaraso vā dāvaggi viya, dusanapaccupaṭṭhāno laddhokāso viya sapatto, āghātavatthupadaṭṭhāno." Vism., p. 398.

***Sloth and torpor* (Thīnamiddha)**

As we saw, the Buddha explains sloth and torpor as a compound hindrance which can be regarded as twofold in terms of its components. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi follows this suggestion through by breaking the compound down into its members and giving separate definitions of sloth (*thīna*) and of torpor (*middha*):

> What is the hindrance of stolidity [sloth] and torpor? First distinguish between stolidity [sloth] and torpor. In this connection, what is stolidity [sloth]? That which is indisposition, unwieldiness of intellect (citta) adhering and cohering, clinging, cleaving to, stickiness, stolidity [sloth], that is a stiffening, a rigidity of the intellect – this is called stolidity [sloth].
>
> What is torpor? That which is indisposition and unwieldiness of sense (lit. body), a shrouding, enveloping, barricading within, torpor that is sleep, drowsiness, sleep, slumbering, somnolence – this is called torpor.
>
> Now this is the stolidity [sloth] and this is the torpor which are called 'the hindrance of stolidity [sloth] and torpor'.[1]

When the Dhammasaṅgaṇi speaks of sloth as *cittassa akallatā akammaññata*, "indisposition and unwieldiness of intellect (or mind)", this should be understood to signify the incapacitation of the mind in its function as consciousness, the principal instrument of cognition. And when the text speaks of torpor as *kāyassa akallatā akammaññatā*, literally "indisposition and unwieldiness of the body," this should be understood to signify the incapacitation of the "mental body" (*nāmakāya*) made up of the mental factors (*cetasika*) concomitant with consciousness. Thence the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā*, in elucidating these definitions, equates *kāya* with the "mental body consisting of the three aggregates,"[2] i.e., the groups of feeling, perception, and mental formations. Thus sloth represents a state of inertia on the cognitive or intellective side of the mental process, torpor a corresponding condition on the affective, perceptual and volitional sides. The same point is brought out by the *Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā* when it glosses sloth as "a sickness of consciousness" and torpor as "a sickness of the mental factors" or "sickness of the three aggregates,"[3] (Wr. tr.) the mental factors being identical with the three mental aggregates – feeling, perception, and volition –

---

1. *Psy. Ethics* pp. 311-12. "Tattha katamaṃ thīnamiddhanīvaraṇaṃ? Atthi thīnaṃ, atthi middhaṃ. Tattha katamaṃ thīnaṃ? Yā cittassa akallatā, akammaññatā, oliyanā, sallīyanā, līnaṃ, līyanā, līyitattaṃ, thīnaṃ, thiyitā, thīyitattaṃ cittassa idaṃ vuccati thīnaṃ. Tattha katamaṃ middhaṃ? Yā kāyassa asallatā, akammaññatā, ānāho, pariyonāho, antosamorodho, middhaṃ, soppaṃ, pacalāyikā, soppaṃ, supanā, supitattaṃ, idaṃ vuccati middhaṃ. Iti idaṃ ca thīnaṃ, idaṃ ca middhaṃ. Idaṃ vuccati thīnamiddha-nīvaraṇaṃ."

2. Buddhaghosa, *The Expositor* (*Atthāsilinī*), *Buddhagosa*'*s Commentary on the Dhammasangani*, *the First Book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Translated by Pe Maung Tin. Revised and edited by C. A. Rhys Davids. Pali Text Society Translation Series, nos. 8, 9. 2 vols. (London: Luzac & Co., for the Pali Text Society, 1920-58), 2:485 (hereafter cited as *Expositor*. "Kāyassāti khandhattaya saṅkhātassa nāmakāya-ssa." Dhs.A., p. 409.

3. "Thīnaṃ cittagelaññaṃ." DN.A. 1:189. "Middhaṃ cetasikagelaññaṃ; middhaṃ khandhattaya gelaññaṃ." *Ibid*., 3:210.

co-existing with consciousness. Though the Dhammasaṅgaṇi defines torpor with a number of synonyms suggestive of physical sleep, its commentary takes pains to point out that what is intended as a hindrance is not the physical tiredness which necessitates sleep, but the indolence and mental obscuration which accompany sleepiness in the case of unliberated individuals.

The *Visuddhimagga* follows the lead of the suttas and Abhidhamma in also giving separate definitions of sloth and torpor consistent with those in the other commentaries:

> Herein, stiffness [sloth] has the characteristic of lack of driving power. Its function is to remove energy. It is manifested as subsiding. Torpor has the characteristic of unwieldiness. Its function is to smother. It is manifested as laziness, or it is manifested as nodding and sleep. The proximate cause of both is unwise attention to boredom, sloth, and so on.[1]

***Restlessness and Worry* (Uddhaccakukkucca)**

As in the previous case, here too the Buddha divides this compound hindrance into its two components before recombining them into one: "Restlessness, monks, is a hindrance; worry is a hindrance. Thus the hindrance of restlessness and worry that comes down in the summary by this method becomes twofold."[2] The Dhammasaṅgaṇi again picks up on this method and defines the two terms separately:

> What is the hindrance of excitement [restlessness] and worry? What is excitement? That excitement of mind which is disquietude, agitation of heart, turmoil of mind: that is called excitement [restlessness].
>
> What is worry? Consciousness of what is lawful in something that is unlawful; consciousness of what is unlawful in something that is lawful; consciousness of what is immoral in something that is moral; consciousness of what is moral in something that is immoral: all this sort of worry, fidgeting, overscrupulousness, remorse of conscience, mental scarifying – this is what is called worry. Now this is excitement [restlessness] and this is the worry which are what is called 'the hindrance of excitement [restlessness] and worry.'[3]

The *Visuddhimagga* also gives separate treatment to restlessness and worry, explicating each in terms of the familiar defining categories. With regard to restlessness the treatise says:

---

1. PP., p. 530. "Tattha thinaṃ anussāhalakkhaṇaṃ, viriyavinodanarasaṃ, saṃsīdanapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ; middhaṃ akammaññatalakkhaṇaṃ, onahanarasaṃ, līnatāpaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, pacalāyikā-niddāpaccupaṭṭhānaṃ vā; ubhayaṃ pi arativijambhikādīsu ayoniso manasikārapadaṭṭhānaṃ." Vism., p. 397.

2. See above, p. 64.

3. *Psy. Ethics*, p. 312-13. "Tattha katamaṃ uddhaccakukkucca nīvaraṇaṃ? Tattha katamaṃ uddhaccaṃ? Yaṃ cittassa uddhaccaṃ avupasamo cetaso vikkhepo bhantattaṃ cittassa. Idaṃ vuccati uddhaccaṃ.

Tattha katamam kukkuccaṃ? Akappiye kappiya saññitā, kappiye akappiya saññitā, avajje vajja saññitā; vajje avajja saññitā; yaṃ evarupaṃ kukkuccaṃ kukkuccāyanā, cetaso vippaṭisāro, manovilekho, idaṃ vuccati kukkuccaṃ. Iti idaṃ ca uddhaccaṃ idaṃ ca kukkuccaṃ idaṃ vuccati uddhaccakukkuccanīvaraṇaṃ." Dhs., p. 233.

> It has the characteristic of disquiet, like water whipped by the wind. Its function is unsteadiness, like a flag or banner whipped by the wind. It is manifested as turmoil, like ashes flung up by pelting with stones. Its proximate cause is unwise attention to mental disquiet. It should be regarded as distraction of consciousness.[1]

Worry is explained in the following way:

> It has subsequent regret as its characteristic. Its function is to sorrow about what has and what has not been done. It is manifested as remorse. Its proximate cause is what has and what has not been done. It should be regarded as slavery".[2]

***Doubt* (*Vicikicchā*)**

The Buddha explains doubt as principally uncertainty and lack of conviction in regard to four items: the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, and the training.[3] Elsewhere he speaks of perplexity regarding the past, the present, and the future, and again about the removal of doubt in regard to dependent arising.[4] The Dhammasaṅgaṇi says:

> To doubt, to be perplexed about the Master… the Doctrine… the Order, about the Discipline, about the past, the future, about both the past and the future, as to whether there be an assignable cause of states causally determined – it is this kind of doubt, this working of doubt, this dubiety, puzzlement, perplexity, distraction, standing at cross-roads; collapses, uncertainty of grasp; evasion, hesitation, incapacity of grasping thoroughly, stiffness of mind, mental scarifying that is called perplexity [hindrance of doubt].[5]

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* explains that doubt in regard to the Master is doubt as to whether or not any person has existed endowed with the physical and spiritual qualities of a Buddha. Doubt regarding the Doctrine is doubt about the existence of the supramundane paths, fruits, and *nibbāna*. Doubt regarding the Sangha is skepticism with respect to the existence of holy persons or the fruitfulness of gifts to the Order. Doubt regarding the discipline questions the effectiveness of morality, concentration, and

---

1. PP., p. 530. "Taṃ avūpasamalakkhaṇaṃ, vātābhighātacalajalaṃ viya; anavaṭṭhānarasaṃ. Vātābhighātacaladhajapatākāviya; bhantattapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, pāsāṇābhighātasamuddhatabhasmaṃ viya; cetaso avūpasame ayoniso manasikārapadaṭṭhānaṃ; cittavikkhepo, ti daṭṭhabbaṃ." Vism., p. 397.

2. PP., p. 532. "Taṃ pacchānutāpalakkhaṇaṃ, katākatānusocanarasaṃ. Vippaṭisārapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, katākatapadaṭṭhānaṃ, dāsabyaṃ iva daṭṭhabbaṃ." Vism., p. 398:

3. MN. 1:101.

4. *1bid*., pp. 8, 260.

5. *Psy. Ethics*. p. 260. "Tattha katamaṃ vicikicchānīvaraṇaṃ? Satthari kaṅkhati vicikicchati; dhamme kaṅkhati vicikicchati; sanghe kaṅkhati vicikicchati; sikkhāya kaṅkhati vicikicchati; pubbante kaṅkhati vicikicchati; aparante kaṅkhati vicikicchati; pubbantāparante kaṅkhati vicikicchati; idappaccayatā paṭiccāsamuppannesu dhammesu kaṅkhati vicikicchati: sā evarūpā kaṅkhā kaṅkhāyanā kaṅkhāyitattaṃ, vimati, vicikicchā, dveḷhakaṃ, dvedhāpatho, saṃsayo, anekamsaggāho, āsappanā, parisappanā, apariyodahanā, thambhitatthaṃ, cittassa mano vilekho, idaṃ vuccati vicikicchānīvaraṇaṃ." Dhs., pp. 233-34.

wisdom in leading to the end of suffering. Doubt regarding the past, future, and both applies to past lives, future lives, and both. And doubt regarding causally determined states is perplexity over the twelvefold formulation of dependent arising.[1]

It is evident from these definitions and descriptions that the species of doubt classed as a hindrance is skeptical indecision with respect to the fundamental tenets of Buddhist doctrine and practice. The doubt to be abandoned is not the freedom of philosophical inquiry, which the Buddha openly encouraged in those who sought to gain personal conviction of truth, but stubborn disbelief and perplexity regarding the principles needed for higher development. As long as such doubt persists, the mind is too obscured by confusion to embark on the path leading to higher attainments. As the *Visuddhimagga* says, doubt has the function of wavering, the manifestation of indecisiveness, and it acts as an obstruction to practice.[2]

Seclusion from the Hindrances

Kinds of Seclusion

The stock passage describing the attainment of the first *jhāna*, with which we began the present chapter, says that the *jhāna* is attained by a bhikkhu who is "secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states of mind'.[3] Now that we have determined the purport of the phrase "unwholesome states of mind" to be the five hindrances, we must inquire into the meaning of the word "seclusion" (*viveka*). The *Visuddhimagga* in its gloss of this passage, explains that there are three kinds of seclusion relevant to the present context – namely, bodily seclusion (*kāyaviveka*), mental seclusion (*cittaviveka*), and seclusion by suppression (*vikkhambhanaviveka*).[4] These three terms allude to two distinct sets of exegetical categories, which must be considered to bring their meaning to light.

The first two terms pertain to a threefold arrangement made up of bodily seclusion, mental seclusion, and "seclusion from the substance" (*upadhi viveka*). The first means physical withdrawal from active social engagement into a condition of solitude for the purpose of devoting time and energy to spiritual development. The second, which generally presupposes success in the first, means the seclusion of the mind from its entanglement in defilements and distracted thoughts; it is in effect equivalent to *jhāna*, or at least the access level of concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). The third, "seclusion from the substance," is *nibbāna*, liberation from the elements of phenomenal existence.[5] The achievement of the first *jhāna* does not depend on the third, from which it is still quite remote, but it does require physical solitude and the separation of the mind from

1. Dhs.A., pp. 388-89.

2. PP., p. 533. Vism., p. 398.

3. See p. 56.

4. Vism., p. 113.

5. MLS. 1:135. MN. 1:104.

obsessions. Hence the *Visuddhimagga* mentions bodily and mental seclusion as pre-conditions for entering the *jhāna*, the former applying particularly to sense stimuli. the latter to the hindrances.

The third type of seclusion pertinent to the context, seclusion by suppression, belongs to a different scheme generally discussed under the heading of "abandonment" (*pahāna*) rather than "seclusion." The basis for this classificatory set is a passage in the canonical exegetical work, the Paṭisambhidāmagga, recording five kinds of abandoning: "abandoning by suppression, by substitution of opposites, by cutting off, by tranquilization, and by deliverance."[1] (Wr. tr.).

The Paṭisambhidāmagga explains them as follows:

> For one developing the first *jhāna*, the hindrances are abandoned by way of suppression. For one developing concentration partaking of penetration, wrong views are abandoned by way of substitution of opposites. For one developing the supramundane path that leads to their destruction, (defilements) are abandoned by way of cutting off. At the moment of fruition they are abandoned by way of tranquillization. And abandoning by deliverance is *nibbāna*, cessation.[2] (Wr. tr.).

These five types of abandonment are elucidated more fully in the commentaries.

1. The *Visuddhimagga* says that "abandoning by suppression" occurs whenever "any of the mundane kinds of concentration suppresses opposing states such as the hindrances,"[3] as illustrated by the pressing down of water-weed by placing a porous pot on weedfilled water. Though the canonical text mentions only the first *jhāna* as an example, Buddhaghosa remarks that this is mentioned because suppression is obvious then, but suppression also occurs before and after the *jhāna*, when the hindrances do not invade consciousness by reason of the force of concentration.[4]

2. The "abandoning by substitution of opposites" is defined as

> the abandoning of any given state that ought to be abandoned through the means of a particular factor of knowledge, which as a constituent of insight is opposed to it, like the abandoning of darkness at night through the means of light.[5]

---

1. "Pañca pahānāni: vikkhambhanappahānaṃ, tadaṅgappahānaṃ, samucchedappahānaṃ, paṭippassaddhi-ppahānaṃ, nissaraṇappahanaṃ." *Paṭisambhidamaggapāli* [Pāli Text in Burmese script], (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1962), p. 26 (hereafter cited as Pts.).

2. "Vikkhambhanappahānā ca nīvaraṇānaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ bhāvayato, tadaṅgappahānā ca diṭṭhigatānaṃ nibbedhabhāgiyaṃ samādhi bhāvayato, samucchedappahānañ ca lokuttaraṃ khayagāmimaggaṃ bhāvayato, paṭippassaddhippahānañca phalakkhaṇe, nissaranappahānañca nirodho nibbānaṃ." *Ibid*., pp. 26-27.

3. PP., p. 812. "Tena tena lokiyasamādhinā nīvaraṇādīnaṃ paccanikadhammānaṃ vikkhambhanaṃ, idaṃ vitkkhambhanappahānaṃ nāma." Vism., p. 596.

4. PP., p. 812. Vism., p. 596.

5. PP., p. 813. Vism., pp. 596-97.

This type of abandoning, in other words, represents a form of factor-substitution in which the arising of a particular species of insight-knowledge cancels out and vanquishes a corresponding kind of error. The *Visuddhimagga* cites as examples the abandoning of the perceptions of permanence, pleasure, and self through the contemplations of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, the principal forms of insight-knowledge.[1] Its commentary adds that insight is not the only type of abandoning by substitution of opposites, since the latter can also occur in other ways such as through the purification of morality, which replaces unwholesome states with wholesome ones.[2]

3. "Abandoning by cutting off" is a name for "the abandoning of the states beginning with the fetters by the noble path knowledge in such a way that they never occur again, like a tree struck by a thunderbolt."[3] This mode of abandoning comes about when the supramundane wisdom of the noble path consciousness eradicates the seeds or latencies of the defilements severing the possibility of their re-occurrence.

4. "'Abandoning by tranquillization' is the tranquillizing or subsiding of the defilements at the moments of 'fruition' following the noble path consciousness"[4] (Wr. tr.). It marks the release consequent upon the destruction of defilements effected by the path.

5. "'Abandoning by deliverance' is *nibbāna*, in which all that is conditioned is abandoned by deliverance from all that is conditioned."[5] (Wr. tr.).

Thus when the *Visuddhimagga* says that the achievement of the first *jhāna* is contingent on seclusion by suppression, we must understand this to mean that it requires the abandonment of the hindrances by way of the abandoning by suppression.

The Plane of Abandonment

The abandoning of the five hindrances is a necessary condition for the attainment of the first *jhāna*. The abandoning of the hindrances does not by itself necessarily indicate that the first *jhāna* has been achieved, but in order for the *jhāna* to be achieved the hindrances have to be abandoned. The type of abandoning relevant to the attainment of *jhāna* is abandoning by suppression. The suppression of the hindrances prepares the mind for entrance upon the *jhāna* by creating a situation conducive to its actualization. The *jhāna* and suppression can thus be understood to exist in a relationship where the

---

1. *Ibid*.

2. Dhammapāla, [*Visuddhimagga Mahā Tīkā*] *Paramatthamañjūsā Nāma Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960), 2:208-209 (hereafter cited as Vism.T.).

3. PP., p. 816. "Yaṃ pana, asanivicakkhābhihatassa rukkhassa viya ariyamaggañāṇena saṃyojanādīnaṃ dhammānaṃ yathā na puna pavattanti evaṃ pahānaṃ, idaṃ samucchedappahānaṃ nāma." Vism., p. 598.

4. "Yaṃ pana phalakkhaṇe paṭippassaddhattaṃ kilesānaṃ etaṃ paṭippassaddhippahānaṃ nāma." Buddhaghosa, [*Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Papañcasūdanī*)], [Vol. 1-2] *Mūlapaṇṇāsaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 3:] *Majjhimapaṇṇāsaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 4:] *Uparipaṇṇāsaṭṭhakathā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 4 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1957), 1:24-25 (hereafter cited as MN.A.).

5. "Yaṃ sabbasaṅkhatanissaṭattā pahīnā sabbasankhataṃ nibbānaṃ etaṃ nissaraṇapahānaṃ nāma." *Ibid*., 25.

arising of the *jhāna* is dependent on the prior suppression of the hindrances, and the persistence of the hindrances is obstructive to the attainment of the *jhāna*.

The work of suppressing the hindrances begins with the first efforts to focus the mind in concentration upon one of the prescribed objects for the development of *jhāna*, such as the *kasiṇas*. As the meditator fixes his mind on the initial object, a point is reached where he can apprehend the object as clearly with his eyes closed as with them open. This visualized object is called the "learning sign" (*uggahanimitta*).[1] As he concentrates on the learning sign, his efforts call into play certain mental factors intermittently present in normal consciousness but which now grow in force, duration, and prominence as a result of the meditative exertion. These mental factors activated by the preliminary work of concentration are applied thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). When they reach full maturity they will become the *jhāna*-factors, but in the preliminary stage of concentration they represent the *jhāna* only in embryonic form. These factors are incompatible with the hindrances and function as their precise antidotes. Thence their repeated cultivation excludes the hindrances, attenuates them, and holds them at bay. As the *Visuddhimagga* explains:

> The hindrances are the contrary opposites of the *jhāna* factors: what is meant is that the *jhāna* factors are incompatible with them, eliminate them, abolish them. And it is said accordingly in the Peṭaka: 'Concentration is incompatible with lust, happiness with ill will, applied thought with stiffness and torpor, bliss with agitation and worry, and sustained thought with uncertainty'.[2]

With continued practice the "learning sign" gives rise to a purified luminous reproduction of itself called the "counterpart sign" (*paṭibhāga nimitta*).[3] The manifestation of the counterpart sign marks the complete suppression of the hindrances and the attainment of a degree of concentration known as "access concentration" (*upacārasamādhi*): "But as soon as it (counterpart sign) arises the hindrances are quite suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration."[4]

All three events – the suppression of the hindrances, the arising of the counterpart sign, and the entrance upon access concentration – take place at precisely the same moment, without interval. And though previously the process of mental cultivation may have required the elimination of different hindrances at different times, when access is achieved they all subside together:

1. PP., p. 130. Vism., p. 101-102.

2. PP., p. 147. "Nīvaranāṇi hi jhānaṅgapaccanikāni; tesaṃ jhānaṅgāneva paṭipakkhāni viddhaṅsakāni vighātakāni ti vuttaṃ hoti. Tathā hi, 'samādhi kāmacchandassa paṭipakkho, pīti byāpādassa, vitakko thīnamiddhassa, sukhaṃ uddhaccakukkuccassa, vicāro vicikicchāyā'ti [ ] Peṭake vuttaṃ." Vism., p. 114.

3. PP., p. 130. Vism., p. 102.

4. PP., p. 131. "Uppannakālato ca pan'assa paṭṭhāya nīvaraṇāni vikkhambhitāni eva honti, kilesā sannisinnā vā, upacārasamādhinā cittaṃ samāhitaṃ evā ti." Vism., p. 102.

> Simultaneously with his acquiring the counterpart sign his lust is abandoned by suppression owing to his giving no attention externally to sense desires (as object). And owing to his abandoning of approval, ill will is abandoned too, as pus is with the abandoning of blood. Likewise stiffness and torpor is abandoned through exertion of energy, agitation and worry is abandoned through devotion to peaceful things that cause no remorse; and uncertainty about the Master who teaches the way, about the way, and about the fruit of the way, is abandoned through the actual experience of the distinction attained. So the five hindrances are abandoned.[1]

The term "access concentration" does not appear as such in the four main *nikāyas* of the Suttapiṭaka, but only in the commentaries. However, a state intermediate between normal consciousness and full concentration, in which the hindrances are overcome, is clearly implied by a number of passages. Thus in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta it is said:

> But when these five hindrances have been put away within him, he looks upon himself as freed from debt, rid of disease, out of jail, a free man, and secure.
>
> And gladness springs up within him on his realising that, and joy arises to him thus gladdened, and so rejoicing all his frame becomes at ease, and being thus at ease he is filled with a sense of peace and in that peace his heart is stayed.[2]

The state where the hindrances are abandoned but the mind has not yet become fully concentrated in the first *jhāna* seems to be the canonical paradigm for access concentration. Though the mental factors determinative of the *jhāna* are present in access concentration, they do not as yet possess sufficient strength to give this state the full qualification of the first *jhāna*. They are strong enough only to exclude the hindrances and hold them at bay. This preliminary state, as we said, is a necessary prelude to the attainment of *jhāna*, but does not itself possess a powerful enough degree of mental unification to actually place the mind in full absorption. With continued practice, however, the nascent *jhāna* factors will grow in strength until they gain sufficient force to issue in the first *jhāna*.

---

1. PP., p. 196. "Tassa paṭibhāganimittapaṭilābhasamakālaṃ eva, bahiddhā kāmānaṃ amanasikārā vikkhambhanavasena kāmacchando pahīyati; anunayappahānen'eva'assa lohitappahānena pubbo viya byāpādo pi pahīyati; tathā āraddhaviriyatāya thīnamiddhaṃ avippaṭisārakarasantadhammānuyogavasena uddhaccakukkuccaṃ, adhigatavisesassa paccakkhatāya paṭipattidesake Satthari paṭipattiyaṃ paṭipattiphale ca vicikicchā'ti pañca nivaraṇāni pahīyanti." Vism., p. 155.

2. T. W. Rhys Davids and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, trans. *Dialogues of the Buddha* (*Dīgha Nikāya*). [Vol. 1: translated by T. W. Rhys Davids; vols. 2-3: translated by T. W. Rhys Davids and C. A. F. Rhys Davids. (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vols. 2-4]. 3 vols. 1889-1921; reprint, London: Luzac & Co., 1956-77), 1;84 (hereafter cited as Dial.). "Seyyathā pi mahā rāja ānanyaṃ yathā ārogyaṃ yathā bandhanā mokkhaṃ yathā bhujissaṃ yathā khemanta bhūmiṃ, evaṃ eva kho mahā-rāja bhikkhu ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassati.

Tassa ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassato pāmujjaṃ jāyati, pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pīti-manassa kāyo passambhati, passaddha kāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati." DN. 1:72.

Thus, beginning from the ordinary distracted condition of the untrained mind, a yogin begins developing concentration. This initial practice arouses certain mental factors which counter the hindrances and unify the mind upon its object. The complete suppression of the hindrances marks the achievement of access concentration. The attainment of *jhāna* then lies close at hand. When, through further application, these factors can unify the mind to the degree of immersion in its object, the *jhāna* is actually attained.

The Causal Arising of the Hindrances

The five hindrances, the Buddha teaches, are like all other phenomena causally conditioned, arising and subsiding in correlation with other things which serve as their supports. When these supports are present the hindrances spring up and grow, when the supports are removed they fade away and disappear. Since the hindrances thus depend on other factors for their origination and cessation, the suppression and elimination of the hindrances requires an understanding of these factors, what they are and how to overcome them.

As part of his program for the conquest of the hindrances, the Buddha has taken special care to provide an exact account of their genetic groundwork. This account proceeds at both the general and particular level, laying bare the causes for the hindrances as a group and for each individual member of this group. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha includes the five hindrances in a sequence of conditions nourishing and sustaining ignorance, itself the fundamental root of *saṃsāra*:

> Ignorance, I declare, monks, has its nutriment. It is not without nutriment. And what is the nutriment of ignorance? 'The five hindrances' should be the reply. I declare, monks, that the five hindrances have their nutriment, are not without nutriment. And what is the nutriment of the five hindrances? 'The three wrong ways of practice' should be the reply. They too have their nutriment. What? 'Nonrestraint of the sense faculties' should be the reply. They too have their nutriment. What? 'Lack of mindfulness and self-composure' should be the reply. That, too, has its nutriment, I declare. What? 'Lack of thorough work of mind' [unwise consideration] should be the reply. And what is the nutriment of that? 'Lack of faith' should be the reply. What is the nutriment of that? 'Not listening to true Dhamma' I declare, monks. That not listening to true Dhamma has its nutriment, is not without nutriment. And what is the nutriment of not listening to true Dhamma? 'Not following after the very man' should be the reply.[1]

1. F. L. Woodward and E. M. Hare, trans. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings* (*Aṅguttara-Nikāya*) *Or More-Numbered Suttas*. [Vol. 1: (Ones, Twos, Threes), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 2: (*The Book of the Fours*), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 3: (*The Books of the Fives and Sixes*), translated by E. M. Hare with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 4: (*The Books of the Sevens*, *Eights and Nines*), translated by E. M. Hare with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 5: (*The Book of the Tens and Elevens*), translated by

As this statement points out, the five hindrances while "nourishing" ignorance are nourished in turn by the three wrong ways of practice, non-restraint of the senses, lack of mindfulness and self-composure, unwise consideration, and so on. Through unwise consideration a man fails to control his mind. Lacking mindfulness he allows his senses to roam unchecked in their objective fields, seeking sensual gratification. Obsessed by sense stimuli, he then engages in the three wrong ways of practice – bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct – and these actions reinforce the hindrances, which then maintain the ignorance that holds him in bondage.

The Buddha often calls attention to the crucial role played by "unwise consideration" (*ayoniso manasikāra*) in the arising of unwholesome states. Unwise consideration is "inexpedient reflection, reflection on the wrong track" (*anupāyamanasikāra*). It is reflection which apprehends its object through the four "perversions" (*vipallāsa*), considering the impermanent as permanent, pain as pleasure, non-self as self, and the foul as beautiful.[1] This wrong reflection is particularly instrumental in causing the arising and growth of all the five hindrances:

> In him who practices unmindful observation sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, excitement and flurry [restless and worry], and doubt, if not already arisen, arise, and if already arisen, sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, excitement and flurry [restlessness and worry], and doubt are conducive to increasing, and growth thereof.[2] (Wr. tr.).

But unwise consideration functions not only as a general cause for the hindrances as a group; it is a specific cause for each of the hindrances individually as well. As the general phenomenon of incorrect attention unwise consideration serves as the common ground for all the hindrances. Acts of incorrect attention, however, always take on

F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids. (Pali Text Society Translation Series nos. 22, 24, 25-27]. 5 vols. 1932-36; reprint, London: Luzac & Co., 1936-79), 5:79 (hereafter cited as GS.). "Avijjamp'āhaṃ bhikkave sāhāraṃ vadāmi. No anāhāraṃ. Ko cāhāro avijjā? Pañca nīvaraṇāti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Pañcap'āhaṃ bhikkhave nīvaraṇe sāhāre vadāmi. No anāhāre. Ko cāhāro pañcannaṃ nīvaraṇānaṃ? Tīṇi duccaritānīti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Tīṇi p'āhaṃ bhikkhave duccaritāni sāhārāni vadāmi, no anāhārāni. Ko cāhāro tiṇṇaṃ duccaritānaṃ? Indriyasaṃvaroti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Indriyasaṃvaraṃ p'āhaṃ bhikkhave sāhāraṃ vadāmi no anāhāraṃ. Ko cāhāro indriyasaṃvarassa? Asatāsampajaññanti'ssa vacanīyaṃ… Asatāsampajaññā p'āhaṃ bhikkhave sāhāraṃ vadāmi; no anāhāraṃ… Ko cāhāro asatāsampajaññassa? Ayoniso manasikāroti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Ayonisomanasikāraṃ p'āhaṃ bhikkhave sāhāraṃ vadāmi; no anāhāraṃ. Ko cāhāro ayonisomanasikārassa? Assaddhiyanti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Assaddhiyaṃ p'āhaṃ bhikkhave sāhāraṃ vadāmi; no anāhāraṃ. Ko cāhāro assaddhiyassa? Asaddhammasavananti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Asaddhammasavanaṃ p'āhaṃ bhikkhave sāhāraṃ vadāmi; no anāhāraṃ. Ko cāhāro asaddhamasavanassa? Asappurisa saṃsevoti'ssa vacanīyaṃ." AN. 5:113.

1. Soma Thera, trans., *The Way of Mindfulness, being a translation of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya; its Commentary, the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Vaṇṇanā of the Papañcasūdanī of Buddhaghosa Thera; and Excerpts from the Līnatthapakāsanā Ṭīkā, Marginal Notes, of Dhammapāla Thera on the Commentary*, (Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1941-1967), p. 116 (hereafter cited as Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*).

2. "Ayoniso bhikkhave manasikaroto anuppanno ceva kāmachando uppajjati uppanno ca kāmacchando bhīyyobhāvāya vepullāya saṃvattati. Anuppanno ceva byāpādo uppajjati… Anuppannaṃ ceva thīnamiddhaṃ…, uddhaccakukkuccaṃ…, Ayoniso ca bhikkhave manasikaroto anuppannāceva vicikicchā uppajjati, uppannā ca vicikicchā bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya saṃvattati." SN. 5:93-94.

particular forms which can be correlated with particular hindrances. Differences in the modes in which unwise consideration occurs are determined by the variations in its objects and associated factors. Depending on these variations, unwise consideration becomes a cause for each separate hindrance:

> Just as this body, monks, is sustained by nutriment, stands in dependence on nutriment, and does not stand without nutriment, in the same way the five hindrances are sustained by nutriment, stand in dependence on nutriment, and do not stand without nutriment.
>
> 1. What, monks, is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, and for the growth and expansion of sensual desire that has already arisen? There is, monks, the beautiful appearance of things. Habitual unwise consideration of that is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, and for the growth and expansion of sensual desire that has already arisen.
>
> 2. And what, monks, is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen ill will, and for the growth and expansion of ill will that has already arisen? There is, monks, the repulsive appearance of things. Habitual unwise consideration of that is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen ill will…
>
> 3. And what, monks, is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sloth and torpor…? There is, monks, discontent, drowsiness, langour, surfeit after meals, and sluggishness of mind. Habitual unwise consideration of them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sloth and torpor…
>
> 4. And what, monks, is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen restlessness and worry…? There is, monks, non-tranquility of mind. Habitual unwise consideration of that is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen restlessness and worry.
>
> 5. And what, monks, is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen doubt…? There are, monks, matters which are grounds for doubt. Habitual unwise consideration of them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen doubt…[1] (Wr. tr.).

---

1. "Seyyathāpi bhikkhave ayaṃ kāyo āhāraṭṭhitiko āhāraṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhati anāhāro no tiṭṭhati. Evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave pañca nīvaraṇā āhāraṭṭhitikā āhāraṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhanti, anāhāraṃ no tiṭṭhanti.

   [1] Ko ca bhikkhave āhāro anuppannassa vā kāmacchandassa uppādāya uppannassa vā kāmacchandassa bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya? Atthi bhikkhave subhanimittaṃ; tattha ayonisomanasikārabahulīkāro ayaṃ āhāro anuppannassa vā kāmacchandassa uppādāya uppannassa vā kāmacchandassa bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya.

   [2] Ko ca bhikkhave āhāro anuppannassa vā byāpādassa uppādāya uppannassa vā byāpādassa bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya? Atthi bhikkhave paṭighanimittaṃ. Tattha ayonisomanasikārabahulīkāro ayaṃ āhāro anuppannassa vā byāpādassa uppādāya uppannassa vā byāpādassa bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya.

   [3] … thīnamiddhassa… ? Atthi bhikkhave arati tandivijambhitā, bhattasammado, cetaso ca līnattaṃ; tattha…

   [4] … uddhaccakukkuccassa…? … cetaso avūpasamo…

   [5] … vicikicchāya uppādāya…? Atthi bhikkhave vicikicchāṭṭhāniyā dhammā, tattha ayoniso manasikārabahulīkāro ayaṃ āhāro anuppannāya vā vicikicchāya uppādāya uppannāya vā vicikicchāya bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya." SN. 5:64-65.

Thus we see that the five hindrances arise and increase, in general, through engagement in the three wrong ways of practice, lack of sense control, lack of mindfulness, and unwise consideration. Specifically, sensual desire arises through unwise consideration of the attractive appearance of things, ill will through unwise consideration of the repulsive features of things, sloth and torpor through unwise consideration of states conducive to lethargy, restlessness and worry through unwise consideration of disturbing states, and doubt through unwise consideration of matters provocative of doubt.

The Elimination of the Hindrances

Once the genetic basis for the rise and growth of the hindrances becomes clear, the way to counteract and eliminate them follows as a matter of course. Since the hindrances occur in dependence on specific causes and conditions, their control and conquest requires simply that their generative causes be removed. Though the actual achievement of such a stoppage may be difficult and require diligent effort, it is the fundamental optimism of Buddhism that the qualities needed to overcome the hindrances are not beyond man's capacity for development, provided only that he is given the proper methodology. It is the purpose of the Buddha's discipline to provide precisely that methodology which leads to the conquest of the hindrances and thereby of ignorance itself.

The final conquest of the hindrances is effected exclusively by the four supramundane paths. To reach the path the development of insight (*vipassanā*) is indispensable, since insight into the true characteristics of phenomena issues in the supramundane wisdom of the path. But in order for insight to arise, the hindrances have to be attenuated to a degree where they no longer disrupt the process of contemplation.

The canonical texts offer two basic approaches to the preliminary overcoming of the hindrances. One is the suppression of the hindrances by the development of serenity (*samatha*), either access concentration or *jhāna*; the other is their elimination in the course of developing insight. The former is described in the discourses of the Buddha expounding the stages of the "gradual training," the latter in the discourses on the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, "the foundations of mindfulness".[1]

Two different approaches are offered because of the differing mental dispositions of disciples. Disciples of a contemplative bent generally incline to first attain concentration by suppressing the hindrances through *jhāna* and then move on to the development of insight. These are called practitioners of the vehicle of serenity (*samathayānika*) who develop "insight preceded by serenity." Other disciples, of an intellectual bent, are generally disposed to strive immediately for insight, leaving until later the task of deepening concentration. These are called practitioners of the vehicle of insight

1. For the gradual training, see DN. 1:47-86. MN. 1:175-84; 271-80. For *satipaṭṭhāna*, see DN. 2:290-315 and MN. 1:55-63.

(*vipassanāyānika*) who develop "serenity preceded by insight." Both types must eventually cultivate insight by practising the foundations of mindfulness, since insight-wisdom is needed to reach the supramundane path. They differ, not with respect to the inclusion of insight, but in the sequence they follow to develop insight. The practitioner of serenity attains *jhāna* then cultivates insight, and finally reaches the path. The practitioner of insight reaches the path directly by cultivating insight, without relying on a foundation of *jhāna*.

We will now consider in turn each of the two approaches to the overcoming of the hindrances, taking first the approach of the gradual training, in which the attainment of serenity is emphasized, and then the approach of the foundations of mindfulness, which emphasizes the direct development of insight. Finally we will briefly note the way the hindrances are eradicated by the four supramundane paths.

The Way of the Gradual Training

We saw above that the hindrances are maintained by a series of conditions beginning with failure to follow after superior men and continuing on through not listening to the true Dhamma, lack of faith, unwise consideration, absence of mindfulness and self-possession, non-restraint of the senses, and engagement in the three wrong ways of practice. The standard canonical presentation of the gradual training, as found for example in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, shows the way this originative pattern is reversed.[1] The presentation begins with the appearance in the world of the Buddha and his teaching of the doctrine, which make available the opportunity to follow after superior men and to hear the true Dhamma. The gain of faith in the teaching leads to commitment to the training, which proceeds according to a graded step-by-step structure designed to lead the practitioner gradually to the goal of liberation.

The most elementary step along the path is the observance of moral discipline. The moral precepts, varying in range from the five precepts for the laity to the full code of Vinaya rules for monks, have the purpose of inculcating restraint of body and speech. Since the unwholesome mental states motivating bodily and verbal misconduct grow stronger when such actions are indulged in, to overcome the defilements it is necessary to begin by controlling their coarser expressions by way of physical and verbal activity. This control is exercised by acting in conformity with the rules of conduct. By careful observance of the moral code, the disciple can eliminate the bodily and verbal modes of misconduct which nourish the five hindrances, thereby weakening their outer impulsive force.

The mere observance of moral rules, however, is not sufficient to combat the hold of the defilements upon the interior processes of the mind. The defilements must be dealt with at their own level by being subjected to a thoroughgoing mental discipline. This training begins with the restraint of the senses (*indriya saṃvara*). Seeing a visible form with the eye, or cognizing any object with any sense faculty, the disciple does not seize upon its

1. *Dial.*, 1:3-26; DN. 1:64-69.

general appearance or details, but controls, guards, and masters his sense faculties.[1] Since apprehension of the general appearance and details of sensually attractive and repulsive objects can become a ground for attachment and aversion, the meditator has to avoid this entrancement with sense objects, confining his attention to the bare data without elaborating upon them through subjective commentary. Then, endowed with this self-restraint, the disciple develops mindfulness and discernment (*satisampajañña*) in all his activities, movements, and modes of deportment.[2] By examining everything he does with full awareness and clear comprehension, he can prevent these activities from becoming bases for the arising of the hindrances. To avoid attachment and aversion with respect to the physical supports of life, he is further enjoined to cultivate contentment (*santuṭṭhi*) with a bare minimum of robes, food, medicine, and shelter.[3]

These preliminary trainings in morality, restraint of the senses, mindfulness and discernment, and contentment provide the necessary preparation for the cultivation of the higher consciousness through the practice of meditation. Once he has fulfilled these preliminaries the disciple is prepared to go into solitude to develop the *jhānas*, and it is here that he meets the hindrances in direct confrontation.

> He, returning from alms-gathering after his meal, sits down cross-legged holding the back erect, having made mindfulness rise up in front of him. He, having got rid of covetousness for the world, lives with a mind devoid of coveting, he purifies the mind of coveting. By getting rid of the taint of ill will, he lives benevolent in mind; and compassionate for the welfare of all creatures and beings, he purifies the mind of the taint of ill will. By getting rid of sloth and torpor, he lives devoid of sloth and torpor; perceiving the light, mindful and clearly conscious, he purifies the mind of sloth and torpor. By getting rid of restlessness and worry, he lives calmly, the mind subjectively tranquillised, he purifies the mind of restlessness and worry. By getting rid of doubt, he lives doubt-crossed; unperplexed as to the states that are skilled, he purifies his mind of doubt.[4]

The elimination of the hindrances requires, first of all, that the meditator honestly appraises his inner condition by way of introspective self-scrutiny: "If a monk while considering knows thus: 'the five hindrances have not been got rid of by me,' he should

---

1. DN. 1:70. MN. 1:180-81.

2. DN. 1:70. MN. 1:181.

3. DN. l:71. MN. 1:180.

4. MLS. 1:227. "So pacchābhattaṃ piṇḍapāta-paṭikkanto nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā. So abhijjhaṃ loke pahāya vigatābhijjhena cetasā viharati, abhijjhāya cittaṃ parīsodheti. Vyāpāda-padosaṃ pahāya avyāpanna-citto viharati, sabba-pāṇa-bhūtahitānukampī vyāpāda-padosā cittaṃ parisodheti. Thīnamiddhaṃ pahāya vigata-thīnamiddho viharati, ālokasaññī sato sampajāno thīna-middhā cittaṃ parisodheti. Uddhacca-kukkuccaṃ pahāya anuddhato viharati, ajjhattaṃ vūpasanta citto uddhacca-kukkuccā cittaṃ parisodheti. Vicikicchaṃ pahāya tiṇṇa vicikiccho viharati, akathaṃkathī kusalesu dhammesu vicikicchāya cittaṃ parisodheti." MN. 1:181. DN. 1:71.

make an effort to get rid of them."[1] When sensuality, ill will, and the other hindrances are present, "he knows with understanding that they are present."[2] Then, when their presence has been detected, what is required is knowledge of their appropriate antidotes. Since all the hindrances arise, as we saw, through unwise consideration, it follows that the most efficient general way to overcome them is to alter the manner in which things are attended to. This means, in effect, to replace unwise consideration with wise consideration (*yonisomanasikāra*). Wise consideration is consideration which accords with the true nature of things; it is "expedient reflection, reflection going on the right track,… reflection that considers the facts of impermanence, suffering, soullessness, and impurity according to reality."[3] By correcting the subtle perceptual and cognitive distortions which supply the hindrances with food for growth, the constant cultivation of wise consideration removes the hindrances and holds them at bay: "But, monks, in him who gives systematic attention, sensual desire (… doubt) which has not arisen does not arise, and if it has arisen it is abandoned."[4]

Just as each hindrance has its individual nutriment in the particular kind of unwise consideration corresponding to its own unique operative mode, so each hindrance has its "non-nutriment" (*anāhāra*), the cause for its elimination, in the appropriate kind of wise consideration.

> And what, monks, is no food for the arising of sensual lust not yet arisen, or for the more-becoming and growth thereof, if already arisen? There is, monks, the repulsive feature of things. Systematic attention thereto, if made much of, is no food for the arising of sensual lust, if not yet arisen, or for its more-becoming and growth if already arisen.[5]

Similarly, wise consideration of the mental liberation of loving kindness (*mettā-cetovimutti*) counteracts ill will; wise consideration of the elements of effort (*ārambhadhātu*), exertion (*nikkamadhātu*), and striving (*parakkamadhātu*) counteracts sloth and torpor; wise consideration of tranquility (*cetaso vūpasama*) counteracts restlessness and worry; and wise consideration of wholesome and unwholesome states (*kusalākusaladhammā*) counteracts doubt.[6]

---

1. MLS. 3:344. "Sace, bhikkhu paccavekkhamāno evaṃ jānāti: 'Appahīnā kho me pañca nīvaraṇā'ti, tena, … bhikkhunā pañcannaṃ nīvaraṇānaṃ pahānāya vāyamitabbaṃ." MN. 3:295.

2. DN. 2:300-301.

3. Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*, p. 117. "Yoniso manasikāro nāma upāyamanasikāro patha manasikāro anicce aniccanti vā dukkhe dukkhanti vā anattani anattāti vā asubhe asubhanti vā manasikāro." MN.A. 1:286.

4. KS. 5:71. "Yoniso ca kho bhikkhave manasikaroto anuppanno ceva kāmacchando (… vicikicchā) nūppajjati. Uppanno ca kāmacchando (… vicikicchā) pahīyati." SN. 5:85.

5. KS. 5:88. "Ko ca bhikkhave anāhāro anuppannassa vā kāmacchandassa uppādāya uppannassa vā kāmacchandassa bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya? Atthi bhikkhave asubbanimittaṃ. Tattha yonisomanasikāra-bahulīkāro ayaṃ anāhāro anuppannassa vā kāmacchandassa uppādāya uppannassa vā kāmacchandassa bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya." SN. 5:105.

6. *Ibid*., pp. 105-106.

In the commentaries the Buddha's miscellaneous suggestions on the elimination of the hindrances are organized into a systematic exposition of six measures conducive to the vanquishing of each hindrance. Sensual desire is to be abandoned by:

> Taking up the sensuously inauspicious subject of meditation; application for the development of the jhāna on the sensuously inauspicious subject of meditation; the guarded state of the controlling faculties of sense; moderation in food; the sympathy and support of good men in the endeavour; stimulating talk that helps the accomplishment of the object in view.[1]

Ill will or anger is overcome by the following six measures:

> Taking up the practice of the love subject of meditation; applying oneself to the development of jhāna on the thought of love; reflection on one's action as one's own property; abundance of wise consideration; sympathetic and helpful companionship of the good; and stimulating talk that assists the development of the thought of love and the overthrow of anger.[2]

The six things leading to the conquest of sloth and torpor are:

> The seeing of the reason of sloth and torpor in the fact of eating too much, or gluttony; the changing of the postures completely; reflection on the perception of light; staying in the open; sympathetic and helpful companionship of the good; and stimulating talk that assists in dispelling sloth and torpor.[3]

The six things conducive to eliminating restlessness and worry are:

> Knowledge; questioning; understanding of disciplinary rules; association with those more experienced and older than oneself in the practice of things like virtue; sympathetic and helpful companionship; and stimulating talk that helps the rejection of mental agitation and worry.[4]

And the following six measures lead to the transcendence of doubt:

> The state of being learned in the Buddha's teaching; of inquiring about the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order of Real Saints; of understanding thoroughly the nature of the Discipline; of being decided about the truth of the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order of the Real Saints; sympathetic and helpful companionship; and stimulating talk that helps to dispel doubt.[5]

---

1. Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*, p. 117. "Asubhanimittassa uggaho asubhabhāvanānuyogo indriyesu guttadvāratā bhojane mattaññutā kalyāṇamittatā sappāyakathā'ti." MN.A. 1:286.

2. Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*, p. 120. "Mettānimittassa uggaho mettābhāvanānuyogo kamassakatāpaccavekkhanā paṭisankhanābahulatā kalyāṇamittatā sappāyakathā'ti" MN.A. 1:287.

3. Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*, p. 123. "Atibhojane nimittaggāho iriyāpathasamparivattanatā āloka-saññāmanasikāro abbhokāsavāso kalyāṇamittatā sappāyakathā'ti." MN. A. 1:288.

4. Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*, p. 124. "Bahussutatā paripucchakatā vinaye pakataññutā vuddhasevitā kalyāṇamittatā sappāyakathā'ti." MN.A. 1:289.

5. Soma Thera, *Way of Mindfulness*, p. 126. "Bahussutatā paripucchakatā vinaye pakataññutā adhimokkha-bahulatā kalyāṇamittatā sappāyakathā'ti." MN.A. 1:290.

The suppression of hindrances effected by these techniques is necessary not only as a preliminary for entering upon *jhāna*, but also to ensure the ability to extend the attainment and make it last long. Even if a meditator can overcome the hindrances by force of sheer concentration, if he has not weakened their grip on the subliminal layers of the mind by right reflection and mental application, they will tend to break through the absorption and dispel his concentration. Therefore his enjoyment of *jhāna* will be short and superficial.

> When a bhikkhu enters upon a *jhāna* without (first) completely suppressing lust by reviewing the dangers in sense desires, etc., and without (first) completely tranquillising bodily irritability by tranquillising the body, and without (first) completely removing stiffness and torpor by bringing to mind the elements of initiative, etc., and without (first) completely abolishing agitation and worry by bringing to mind the sign of serenity, etc., and without (first) completely purifying his mind of other states that obstruct concentration, then that bhikkhu soon comes out of that *jhāna* again, like a bee that has gone into an unpurified hive, like a king who has gone into an unclean park.[1]

The Way of Mindfulness

In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the "Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness,"[2] the Buddha proposes a different technique for overcoming the hindrances, one which utilizes direct, mindful observation of the hindrances themselves as a method for loosening their hold upon the mind. This approach presupposes the same basic set of preliminaries observed in following the gradual training: moral discipline, restraint of the senses, mindfulness and discernment, and contentment. However, instead of employing a variety of techniques to counteract the hindrances with the aim of reaching *jhāna*, the method of mindfulness proceeds directly to the contemplation of mental and bodily phenomena with the aim of arousing insight. The diverse phenomena of body and mind are classified into four "foundations of mindfulness": the body (*kāya*), feelings (*vedanā*), states of mind (*citta*), and mental objects (*dhamma*). The confrontation with the hindrances enters into the last set, the contemplation of mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*), where it comes as the first exercise in this group:

> Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances.
>
> How, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances?

---

1. PP., p. 157. "Yo hi bhikkhu kāmādīnavapaccavekkhanādīhi kāmacchandaṃ na suṭṭhu vikkhambhetvā, kāyapassaddhivasena kāyaduṭṭhullaṃ na suṭṭhu paṭipassaddhaṃ katvā, ārambhadhātumanasikārādivasena thīnamiddhaṃ na suṭṭhu paṭivinodetvā, samathanimittamanasikārādivasena uddhaccakukkuccaṃ na suṭṭhu samūhataṃ katvā, aññe pi samādhiparipanthe dhamme na suṭṭhu visodhetvā jhānaṃ samāpajjati, so avisodhitaṃ āsayaṃ paviṭṭhabhamaro viya, avisuddhaṃ uyyānaṃ paviṭṭharājā viya ca, khippaṃ-eva nikkhamati." Vism., p. 122.

2. DN. 2:290-315. MN. 1:55-63.

> Here, O bhikkhus, when sensuality is present, a bhikkhu with understanding knows: 'I have sensuality,' or when sensuality is not present he with understanding knows: 'I have no sensuality'. He understands how the arising of the non-arisen sensuality comes to be; he understands how the abandoning of the arisen sensuality comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sensuality comes to be… anger is present… sloth and torpor are present… agitation and worry are present… When doubt is present, he with understanding knows: 'I have doubt'. He understands how the arising of non-arisen doubt comes to be; he understands how the abandoning of the arisen doubt comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned doubt comes to be.[1]

Since it is impossible for a meditator to completely avoid situations tending to provoke the hindrances into activity, he requires a technique which enables him to deal with them effectively at the causal level – to prevent them from arising if possible, or to eliminate them swiftly and surely if they should arise. Mindful observation provides him with just such a technique. Through bare attention to the hindrances, he is able to gain clear comprehension of their individual nature and to discern their causes and conditions. Contemplation of the hindrances is a means both to calm and insight. By directly facing each hindrance that presents itself, the meditator is able to divest it of the destructive power it can freely exercise when it escapes undetected. Repeated introspective self-examination, performed with complete sincerity, gives him the self-knowledge required to transform and purify the direction of his mental life. In this way mindfulness of the hindrances becomes a means to the development of concentrated calm.

The same contemplation, when directed towards the hindrances as bare instances of phenomena exhibiting the universal features of phenomena, becomes a means for gaining insight (*vipassanā*). By observing the rise and fall of the mental processes associated with the hindrances, the meditator gains insight into the fact of impermanence (*anicca*). By attending to their restless nature and disturbing effects, he sees the truth of suffering (*dukkha*). And by viewing the hindrances as mere impersonal events, devoid of any substance or ego-oriented reference point, he comes to an appreciation of the truth of selflessness (*anattā*). If these insights are pursued and developed to the deeper levels they imply, they could even issue in the attainment of the supramundane path. In this way the method of mindfulness is able to transform even obstacles to meditation into integral parts of the meditative process.

1. *Dial.*, 2:334-35. "Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu santaṃ vā ajjhattaṃ kāmacchandaṃ 'atthi me ajjhattaṃ kāmacchando'ti' pajānāti, asantaṃ vā ajjhattaṃ kāmacchandaṃ 'n'atthi me ajjhattaṃ kāmacchando'ti pajānāti. Yathā ca anuppannassa kāmacchandassa uppādo hoti taṃ ca pajānāti, yathā ca uppannassa kāmacchandassa pahānaṃ hoti taṃ ca pajānāti, yathā ca pahinassa kāmacchandassa āyatiṃ anuppādo hoti taṃ ca pajānāti… ajjhattaṃ vyāpādaṃ… thīnamiddhaṃ… uddhaccakukkuccaṃ… vicikicchaṃ 'atthi me ajjhattaṃ vicikicchā'ti pajānāti, asantaṃ vā ajjhattaṃ vicikicchaṃ 'n'atthi me ajjhattaṃ vicikiccha'ti pajānāti. Yathā ca anuppannāya vicikicchāya uppado hoti taṃ ca pajānāti, yathā ca uppanāya vicikicchāya pahānaṃ hoti taṃ ca pajānāti, yathā ca pahīnāya vicikicchāya āyatiṃ anuppādo hoti taṃ ca pajānāti." DN. 2:300-301.

In the practice of insight meditation no deliberate effort is made to develop concentration. Since the practitioner does not confine his attention to a single object, the arising of concentration at the access or absorption level is impossible. Insight meditation involves the contemplation of the constantly changing flow of phenomena. its object is shifting from moment to moment, as one phenomenon passes away to be replaced by the next. Thus the stability of a single focal point essential to attaining *jhāna* is absent.

Nevertheless, the practice of insight does produce a spontaneous kind of concentration existing concurrently with itself. This kind of mental unification, called "momentary concentration" (*khaṇika samādhi*) comes into being through the fixity with which the mind attends to the changing phenomena. As the mind examines undistractedly the phenomenal process, the successive moments of contemplation acquire a concentrative power equal to the task of suppressing the hindrances. Though it does not possess the force needed to attain *jhāna*, this momentary concentration arisen through insight-practice is sufficiently strong to prevent the hindrances from disturbing contemplation and to allow the wisdom of insight to arise. Thus even without developing *jhāna* the practitioner of bare insight can build up concentration moment by moment, giving him enough mental unification to serve as a basis for insight and attainment of the path.

In sum, the practitioner of serenity first suppresses the hindrances by access concentration or *jhāna*, then begins to develop insight. The practitioner of bare insight begins by contemplating the four foundations of mindfulness. He incidentally develops momentary concentration which eliminates the hindrances, then he arouses insight.

The Eradication of the Hindrances

In the *jhāna* the hindrances are abandoned only by way of suppression. Though inactive, they still remain as dormancies in the mental continuum, capable of cropping up again if sufficiently stimulated. The actual eradication of the hindrances requires the wisdom of the supramundane paths, which abandons the hindrances by cutting them off at the root. This abandonment by cutting off (*samucchedappahāna*) is accomplished with respect to different hindrances by different paths in the four stages of supramundane development. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, the first path, the path of stream-entry (*sotāpattimagga*), cuts off the hindrance of doubt. The second, the path of the once-returner (*sakadāgāmi magga*), weakens all the hindrances but cuts off none. The third, the path of the non-returner (*anāgāmi magga*), cuts off the hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, and worry. And the fourth, the path of arahatship (*arahatta magga*), cuts off the remainder – sloth and torpor and restlessness.[1] Thus it is only the arahat who has completely overcome all the hindrances. In the arahat, the Buddha explains, "these five hindrances are abandoned, cut down at the root, made like a palmtree stump, made something that has ceased to be, so as not to grow again in future time."[2]

1. PP., p. 802. Vism., p. 589.

2. "Tesaṃ pañca nīvaraṇā pahīnā ucchinnamūlā tālāvatthukatā anabhāvakatā āyatiṃ anuppādadhammā." SN. 5:327.

The Benefits of Abandoning the Hindrances

From the perspective of Pāli Buddhism, the reduction and elimination of the five hindrances is essential not only to the attainment of *jhāna*, but to all aspects of man's moral and spiritual development. The hindrances represent an entire spectrum of defiled mental states. Their presence implies the presence as well of the unwholesome roots, the floods, bonds, cankers, clinging, ties and fetters.[1] They are like a debt, a disease, imprisonment, slavery, and a desert road.[2] When they overpower the mind a man can perceive neither his own good, the good of others, or the good of both.[3] Under their influence he will do what he should not do and neglect what he ought to do.[4] They corrupt the mind and weaken wisdom.[5] They cause spiritual blindness and ignorance, destroy wisdom, lead to vexation, and distract from *nibbāna*.[6] Just as gold impaired by five impurities – iron, copper, tin, lead, and silver – is not pliant and wieldy, lacks radiance, is brittle, and cannot be wrought well, so the mind, corrupted by the five hindrances, "is not pliant and wieldy, lacks radiant lucidity and firmness and cannot concentrate well upon the eradication of the taints."[7] Therefore the Buddha can say of them: "Rightly speaking a person, bhikkhus, would call the five hindrances 'a heap of demerits', for indeed one entire mass of demerit are the five hindrances."[8]

The abandonment of the hindrances marks the beginning of freedom: "But when these five hindrances have been put away within him, he looks upon himself as freed from debt, rid of diseases, out of jail, a free man, and secure."[9] With the hindrances abandoned, there is no limit to the possibilities for spiritual growth. Just as gold free

---

1. PP., p. 147. Vism., p. 87.

2. *Dial*., 1:84. DN. 1:73.

3. KS. 5:103. "Atthattham pi… parattham pi… ubhayattham pi tasmim samaye yathābhūtam na jānāti na passati." SN. 5:121-22.

4. AN. 2:67

5. KS. 5:79. "Cetaso upakkilesā paññāya dubbalikaraṇā." SN. 5:94.

6. KS. 5:81. "Nīvaraṇā andhakaraṇā acakkhukaraṇā aññāṇakaraṇā paññānirodhikā vighātapakkhiyā anibbānisaṃvattanikā." SN. 5:97.

7. Nyānaponika Thera, trans. and ed., *The Five Mental Hindrances And Their Conquest*, *Selected Texts from the Pali Canon and the Commentaries*. (Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1961), p. 2 (hereafter cited as Nyānaponika, *Five Mental Hindrances*). "Evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave pañcime cittassa upakkilesā, yehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ cittaṃ na ceva mudu hoti, na ca kamaniyaṃ na ca pabhassaraṃ pabhaṅgu ca na ca sammāsamādhiyati āsavānaṃ khayayā." AN. 3:16.

8. KS. 5:124. "Akusalarāsi ti bhikkhave vadamāno pañcanīvaraṇe sammāvadamāno vadeyya. Kevalo hāyaṃ bhikkhave akusalarāsi yadidaṃ pañcanīvaraṇā." SN. 5:145.

9. *Dial*. 1:84. "Seyyathā pi mahārāja ānanyaṃ yathā ārogyaṃ yathā bandhanā mokkhaṃ yathā bhujissaṃ yathā khemantabhūmiṃ, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja bhikkhu ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassati." DN. 1:73.

from the five impurities will be pliant and supple, radiant and firm, and can be wrought well, so, the Buddha says:

> If the mind is freed of these five impurities, it will be pliant and supple, will have radiant lucidity and firmness, and will concentrate well upon the eradication of the taints. To whatever state realizable by the higher mental faculties one may direct the mind, one will, in each case, acquire the capacity of realization, if the (other) conditions are fulfilled.[1]

The abandonment of the five hindrances is the precondition, not only for the attainment of *jhāna*, but for all other higher achievements. It is by the abandoning of the hindrances that the four *Brahmavihāras*[2] become possible, as the meditator must purge his mind of the hindrances prior to suffusing the world with the sublime emotions of loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.[3] Before teaching a receptive disciple the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha always made sure that his mind was "ready, malleable, devoid of the hindrances"[4] (*vinīvaraṇacitta*) in order to ensure his ability to grasp this profound doctrine, inaccessible to a defiled mind. Freedom from the hindrances is thus a requisite for the arising of the "eye of Dhamma," the direct insight into the truth which leads to the first level of liberation, the stage of stream-entry (*sotāpatti*). Those who have entered the stream and are training to attain "supreme security from bondage" dwell having abandoned the five hindrances.[5] It is when his mind has become "composed, quite purified, quite clarified, without blemish, without defilement, grown soft and workable, fixed, immovable,"[6] that the disciple can direct it to attain the triple knowledge (*tevijjā*) – the recollection of former lives, the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings, and the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers.[7] All who reach liberation first abandon the hindrances:

> All those who are emancipated from the world, who were emancipated or will be emancipated, are emancipated by abandoning the five hindrances which are corruptions of the mind and weakening of wisdom, establishing their minds

1. Nyānaponika, *Five Mental Hindrances*, pp. 2-3. "Yato ca kho bhikkhave cittaṃ imehi pañcahi upakkilesehi vimuttaṃ hoti, taṃ hoti cittaṃ mudu ca kammaniyaṃ ca pabhassaraṃ ca na ca pabhaṅgu sammā samādhiyati āsavānaṃ khayāya. Yassa yassa ca abhiññāsacchikaraṇīyassa dhammassa cittaṃ abhinnāmeti abhiññāsacchikiriyāya tatra tatra'eva sakkhibhabbataṃ pāpuṇāti sati sati āyatane." AN. 3:17-17.

2. To speak of the *Brahmavihāras* as an alternative to the attainment of *jhāna* is perhaps misleading. The emotional states comprised by the *Brahmavihāras* are meditation subjects used to achieve serenity, and the full development of the *Brahmavihāras* issues in the *jhānas*.

3. DN. 3:49-50.

4. DN. 1:110. MN. 1:380.

5. KS. 5:29. "Ye te āvuso Mahānāma bhikkhū sekhā appattamānasā anuttaraṃ yogakkhemaṃ patthayamānā viharanti, te pañca nīvaraṇe pahāya viharanti." SN. 5:327.

6. MLS. 1:228-29. "So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgane vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte," MN. 1:182.

7. "Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya… sattānaṃ cutūpapātañāṇāya… āsavānaṃ khayañāṇāya cittaṃ abhininnā-meti." MN. 1:183.

> well in the four foundations of mindfulness; and developing correctly the seven factors of enlightenment.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Even the perfectly enlightened Buddhas of the past, present, and future awaken to supreme, perfect enlightenment by having first abandoned the five hindrances.[2] Thus the Buddha can prescribe his teaching for the destruction of these impediments: "It is for the full comprehension, entire understanding, destruction, elimination of these five hindrances that the Noble Eightfold Path should be cultivated.[3]

---

1. "Ye kho keci lokamhā niyyiṃsu vā niyyanti vā niyyissanti vā, sabbe te pañca nīvaraṇe pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbalīkaraṇe catusu satipaṭṭhānesu supatiṭṭhitacittā sattabojjhaṅge yathābhūtaṃ bhāvetvā evaṃ ete lokamhā niyyiṃsu vā niyyanti vā niyyissanti vā." AN. 5:195.

2. *Dial*. 2:89. DN. 2:83.

3. KS. 5:49-50. "Imesaṃ kho bhikkhave pañcannaṃ nīvaraṇānaṃ abhiññāya pariññāya parikkhayāya pahānāya ayaṃ ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo bhāvetabbo'ti." SN. 5:60.

Chapter Four

THE FIRST JHĀNA AND ITS FACTORS

The attainment of *jhāna*, as we said at the outset of the last chapter, can be understood from two points of view: one is the elimination of the states obstructive to its attainment, the factors to be abandoned (*pahānaṅgāni*); the other the acquisition of the states constituting its attainment, the factors of possession (*samannāgataṅgāni*) or *jhāna* factors (*jhānaṅgāni*). In the case of the first *jhāna* the factors to be abandoned are the five hindrances. As the meditator strives with diligence to develop concentration he eventually succeeds in suppressing the hindrances, entering the threshold stage of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) where the *jhāna* factors are contained in fledgling form. Then, with continued exertions, the *jhāna* factors ripen to the point where they can thrust the mind into the first *jhāna*, the initial stage of absorption (*appaṇāsamādhi*).

The *jhāna* factors are the five mental states: applied thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness of mind (*cittass'-ekaggatā*). Four of these are mentioned in the formula for the *jhāna*; the fifth, one-pointedness, is added elsewhere.[1] Having led the mind to the *jhāna*, these five phenomena remain in the *jhāna* as its constituting factors. They do not enter the first *jhāna* as mere extrinsic adjuncts, but as defining properties, giving it a distinct shape and character. Thence to understand the first *jhāna* it is necessary to approach it via a study of its factors.

In the present chapter we will examine in detail each of the five factors belonging to the first *jhāna*. We will give special attention to the specific qualities and functions these phenomena possess in the structure of the *jhāna*, as opposed to their occurrence elsewhere. Then we will take a general overview of the *jhāna* itself in order to make it clear that the first *jhāna* is not just a chance combination of unconnected factors but an organic unity of many coordinate states. This will be followed by a look at the place of the *jhāna* in the process of consciousness, the cognitive series used to show the dynamic nature of experience. We will conclude the chapter with some remarks on the ways of perfecting the first *jhāna*, a necessary prelude to the higher development of concentration.

Vitakka: A. General

The word *vitakka*, derived from the Pāli root *tak* (Skt. *tark*) meaning "to think," frequently appears in the texts in conjunction with the other word *vicāra*, which derives from the root *car* (P. & Skt.) meaning "to move." The two together signify two interconnected but distinct aspects of the thought process. The primary word *takka*

1. For the formula, see Chapter III, p. 52.

means literally "thinking"; the prefix *vi* gives it a strengthened sense, so that *vitakka* means pronounced or decisive thinking.[1]

The word *vitakka* is often found in the suttas in various contexts all suggestive of this meaning of thought. It appears in several places as the final term in a sequence preceded by feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*). Thus referring to himself, the Buddha states that he is aware in every case of the arising, persistence, and passing away of feelings, perceptions, and *vitakkas*:

> Here, Ananda, in the Tathāgata feelings are understood as they arise, as they remain present, as they pass away; perceptions are understood as they arise, as they remain present, as they pass away; applied thoughts (*vitakkā*) are understood as they arise, as they remain present, as they pass away.[2] (Wr. tr.).

Vitakka takes the same objects as perception. It is divided into six classes by way of its objects; thus there are thoughts about forms, thoughts about sounds, thoughts about smells, thoughts about tastes, thoughts about tangibles, and thoughts about ideas. Because *vitakka* has the same objects as perception, but follows the latter in the account of the cognitive process, it is clearly a development and advance beyond the perceptual function. This is borne out by the Madhupiṇḍika Sutta where *vitakka* is shown following perception in the process by which mental impediments (*papañca*) come to obsess the mind. The great disciple Mahākaccāyana explains that in dependence on the sense faculties and their objects consciousness arises. The meeting of the faculty, object, and consciousness is contact (*phassa*). In dependence on contact feeling arises. Then: "What one feels one perceives; what one perceives one thinks about; what one thinks about becomes an impediment."[3] (Wr. tr.).

The understanding of *vitakka* as thought is further supported by an important passage from the Culavedalla Sutta. Here the wise bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā describes *vitakka* and *vicāra* as "activity of speech" (*vacisaṃkhāra*), giving as the reason: "Having first had applied thought and sustained thought, one subsequently breaks out into speech, therefore applied thought and sustained thought is activity of speech."[4] (Wr. tr.). The commentary defines "activity of speech" as that which "causes, creates, or activates speech,"[5] (Wr. tr.), and classifies as activities causing speech *vitakka*, *vicāra*, and the wholesome and unwholesome volitions motivating verbal expression. The sub-commentary to the sutta explains that *vitakka* and *vicāra* are said to activate speech because "the mind without *vitakka* and *vicāra* is unable to make a verbal sound."[1]

1. "Balavatara takkassa etaṃ nāmaṃ." Dhs.A., p. 187.

2. "Idha Ānanda Tathāgatassa viditā vedanā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhattaṃ gacchanti; viditā saññā, viditā vitakkā uppajjanti. viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhattaṃ gacchanti." MN. 3:124.

3. "Yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti." MN. 1:111-12.

4. Pubbe kho āvuso vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṃ bhindati. Tasmā vitakka vicārā vacīsaṅkhāro." MN. 1:301.

5. "Vācaṃ saṅkharoti karoti nibbatteti ti vacisaṅkhāro." MN.A. 2:263.

(Wr. tr.). Since the inner verbal formulation of ideas precedes and governs their articulation through the apparatus of verbal expression, the key factors in the thinking process are also the mainsprings of intelligible speech.

The thought element in *vitakka* again comes to light in the use of the doubly augmented word *parivitakka* to mean "reflection" or "ratiocination." We frequently see in the texts an individual sitting in solitude give rise to a chain of *parivitakkas*, reflections or reasonings in his mind, which he then expresses outwardly at a later time. Thus, for example, when the Buddha was considering the difficulties the average person would meet in understanding the Dhamma, it is said: "Then as the Lord was meditating in seclusion a reasoning arose in his mind thus..."[2] "Reflections on reasons" (*akaraparivitakka*) is further mentioned as one of the inadequate grounds for adopting a belief rejected in the famous passage of the Kālāma Sutta.[3]

Elsewhere the Buddha speaks of eight thoughts of a great man (*mahāpurisā vitakkā*), which he recommends to his disciples. These are the thoughts that the Dhamma is

1. for one who wants little.
2. for one who is contented.
3. for the secluded,
4. for the energetic,
5. for one who is mindful,
6. for the composed,
7. for the wise, and
8. for one who delights in freedom from impediments.[4]

Here the identification of *vitakka* with thought appears quite explicit.

Nevertheless, although *vitakka* does function as an essential ingredient in discursive thinking, it would be premature to equate it flatly with verbally formulated thought. The reason for this qualification is that *vitakka* also occurs in states of consciousness where thought formulation is not in evidence, as for example in the consciousness of the first *jhāna*, in the supramundane consciousness of the noble path, as well as in more primitive types of bare sense cognition. Thence the question arises as to whether *vitakka* has a more elemental meaning than verbalized thinking, and if so, what that meaning is.

The answers to these questions are provided by the Abhidhamma, building upon a suggested solution already found in the suttas. The suttas use the word *saṃkappa* –

1. "Na hi taṃ vitakka vicārarahitacittaṃ vacighosaṃ nibbattetuṃ sakkoti." Dhammapāla, [*Majjhima Nikāya Ṭīka*] [vols. 1-2] *Mulapaṇṇāsa ṭīkā*; [vol. 3:] *Majjimapaṇṇāsa ṭīkā… Uparipaṇṇāsa ṭīkā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960-61], 2:383 (hereafter cited as MN.T.).

2. I. B. Horner, trans. *The Book of the Discipline* (*Vinaya-Piṭaka*), Vols. 1-3: (*Suttavibhanga*), vol. 4: (*Mahāvagga*), vol. 5: (*Cullavagga*), vol. 6: (*Parivāra*), [Sacred Books of the Buddhists Series, vols. 10-11, 13-14, 20, 25], 6 vols. (London: Luzac & Co., 1951-72), 4:6 (hereafter cited as BD.). "Atha kho bhagavato rahogatassa patisallīnassa evaṃ cetaso parivitakko udapādi." Vinp. 1:4.

3. AN. 1:189.

4. AN. 5:385.

usually translated "thought," "intention," or "aim" – as an interchangeable equivalent of *vitakka*. In one passage of the Mahācattarīsaka Sutta the Buddha defines *sammā-saṃkappa*, the "right intention" occurring in the supramundane path, by a chain of synonyms inclusive of *vitakka*.[1] The Dhammasaṅgaṇi, in its analysis of the states, picks up these synonyms and gives a definition of wholesome *vitakka* identical in all respects with the sutta definition except that it omits the phrases limited to the supramundane path.

> The ratiocination, the conception (*vitakka*), which on that occasion is the disposition [intention], the fixation, the focussing, the application of the mind, right intention – this is the "conception" (*vitakka*) that there then is.[2]

The Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā elaborates upon these terms as follows:

> "Intention" (*saṃkappa*) conveys the sense of thorough-designing. And fixation is the applying the selective mind to the object. Next, "focussing" is a term for "strong fixation," intensified by a prefix. Then, "uplift of mind" [application of the mind] is the elevating or setting up of consciousness on to an object. And "right intention" is intention which is praiseworthy, which has won to a moral state because of its veracity and progressiveness.[3]

The explicative phrase which reveals most about the actual nature and function of *vitakka* is the expression *cetaso abhiniropanā*, "the application of mind," which is explained as the lifting or mounting of consciousness onto the object. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* singles out this aspect as the primary characteristic of *vitakka* and illustrates it with a brief analogy:

> Its [main] characteristic is the lifting of consciousness on to the object; having an object, it lifts consciousness up to it. As someone depending on a relative or friend dear to the king ascends the king's palace, so depending on initial application the mind ascends the object. Therefore it has been said that initial application lifts the mind on to the object.[4]

This function of applying the mind to the object seems to be the unifying element underlying the different modes in which *vitakka* occurs, giving it a single quality despite the diversity of its applications. In the processes of discursive thinking, thought-conception, and imagination the operation of *vitakka* may be more conspicuous than in other cognitive processes. But wherever it occurs its directive function is at work,

---

1. MN. 3:73.

2. *Psy. Ethics*, pp. 10-11. "Yo tasmim samaye takko vitakko, saṃkappo, appanā, byappanā, cetaso abhiniropanā, sammā saṃkappo, ayaṃ tasmiṃ samaye vitakko hoti." Dhs., p. 18.

3. *Expositor*, 1:189. "Balavatara takkassetaṃ nāmaṃ. Suṭṭhu kappanavasena saṃkappo. Ekaggaṃ cittaṃ ārammaṇe appetīti appanā. Dutiyapadaṃ upasaggavasena vaḍḍhitaṃ. Balavatarā vā appanā byappanā. Ārammaṇe cittaṃ abhiniropeti cetaso abhiniropanā. Yathāvatāya niyyānikatāya ca kusalabhāvappatto pasattho saṃkappoti sammāsamkappo." Dhs.A., p. 187.

4. *Expositor*, 1:151. "Svāyaṃ ārammaṇe cittassa abhiniropanalakkhaṇo. So hi ārammaṇe cittaṃ āropeti. Yathā hi koci rājavallabhaṃ ñātiṃ vā mittaṃ vā nissāya rājagehaṃ ārohati. Evaṃ vitakkaṃ nissāya cittaṃ ārammaṇaṃ ārohati." Dhs.A., p. 157.

becoming especially prominent in the first *jhāna*, where discursive thought has subsided but *vitakka* remains.

In an illuminating discussion, Shwe Zan Aung shows how the directing of the mind and its concomitants to an object is the elemental meaning of *vitakka*, applicable in every case where its operation is discernible. Aung explains:

> [In cognition of sense objects] the element of *vitakka* is present as a directing of concomitant elements to a sensible object. In imagination *vitakka* directs to an image; in conception, to an idea; in symbolical conception, to a concept; in judgments (*vinicchaya-vīthi*), to a proposition; in reasoning (*takkavīthi*), alluded to, but not discussed in my Essay (it belongs to the province of logic), to a syllogism or an inference. In doubt, *vitakka* is a directing now to one object, now to another, back again, etc. In distraction *vitakka* is a directing of mind to several objects one after another. In first *jhāna*, *vitakka* is a directing of mind to the 'after-image' etc., and in transcendental consciousness, *vitakka* is a directing of mind to *nibbāna*, the Ideal. So engaged it is called *sammā-saṃkappa*, perfect aspiration.[1]

A problem seems to arise from the fact that, according to the abhidhammic system of analysis, *vitakka* is not a universal concomitant of consciousness. It is not present in every state of consciousness. So the question arises how, in those states of consciousness devoid of *vitakka*, the mind can be mounted onto its object. The commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya answers that when *vitakka* is absent the mind is directed upon its object through its own nature (*attano dhammatāya*), without dependence on other states.[2] At the level of the second *jhāna*, after *vitakka* has subsided, the mind remains focussed on its object even more intensely than before, despite the absence of *vitakka*. The Majjhima Nikāya subcommentary explains that a state of mind without *vitakka* can mount upon the object by the power of *vitakka* itself through the force of previous experience. Just as a person who has become familiar with a king can enter his dwelling freely without hesitation, so the mind which has gained experience of the object by means of *vitakka* can remain focussed on the object even after *vitakka* has left the mind.[3]

Vitakka: B. Specific

Vitakka can be divided into two kinds – the wholesome (*kusala*) and the unwholesome (*akusala*). We will now examine each of these two types of *vitakka*, beginning with the unwholesome, then deal with *vitakka* in the specific context of the first *jhāna* and as a factor in the supramundane path.

---

1. Anuruddha, *Compendium of Philosophy*, *Being a Translation Now made for the First Time from the 0riginal Pali of the Abhidhammattha Saṇgaha*. Translated with Introductory Notes and essay by Shwe Zan Aung. Revised and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids (Pali Text Society Translation Series, vol. 2; London: H. Frowde, 1910-63), p. 238 (hereafter cited as *Compendium*).

2. MN.A. 4:93.

3. MN.T. 3:307.

Akusala Vitakka

In itself *vitakka* is neither unwholesome (*akusala*) nor wholesome (*kusala*). It is merely the intrinsically indeterminate function of directing the mind and its concomitants onto the object. Its moral quality is determined by its associated factors, especially its underlying roots. When it is associated with the unwholesome roots – greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) – it becomes unwholesome *vitakka*, When it is associated with the wholesome roots – non-greed (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*), and non-delusion (*amoha*) – it becomes wholesome *vitakka*. The *vitakka* influenced by these roots can reach expression physically as unwholesome bodily action (*akusalakāyakamma*) or verbally as unwholesome verbal action (*akusalavacīkamma*). If it does not express itself outwardly it remains internal pertaining to unwholesome mental action (*akusalamanokamma*).

Unwholesome *vitakkas* are enumerated in the suttas as threefold: thoughts of sensuality (*kāmavitakka*), thoughts of ill will (*byāpādavitakka*), and thoughts of harming (*vihiṅsāvitakka*). The former is thought rooted in the factor of greed; the latter two are differing expressions of thought rooted in hatred or aversion. In describing his practice during his search for enlightenment the Buddha explains that he divided *vitakkas* into two categories, the wholesome and the unwholesome. On the unwholesome side he placed thoughts of sensuality, thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of harming. Whenever one of these thoughts would arise in him he would dispel it by reflecting that these thoughts lead to the harm of oneself, to the harm of others, and to the harm of both; they are destructive of wisdom, conduce to vexation, and lead away from *nibbāna*.[1] He then explains that whenever one frequently thinks and ponders on these unwholesome thoughts, the mind inclines to them and makes them habitual.[2]

Unwholesome thoughts (*akusalavitakka*) are also called unwholesome intentions (*akusalasaṃkappa*), the words *vitakka* and *saṃkappa* being used interchangeably. Thus the Buddha also declares that there are three unwholesome intentions – namely, intentions for sense pleasures, for ill will, and for harming. In the Samanamaṇḍikā Sutta the Buddha states that these unwholesome intentions originate from perception:

> And how, carpenter, do these unskilled intentions originate? Their origination is spoken of too. It should be answered that their origination is in perception. Which perception, for perceptions are many, various, diverse? Perception of sense-pleasure, perception of malevolence, perception of harming – originating from these are unskilled intentions.[3]

In the Saṃyutta Nikāya the Buddha explains that intentions of sensuality arise in dependence on sensual perceptions and issue in sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), the fever of sensuality (*kāmapariḷāha*), and the search for sensual gratification (*kāmapariyesanā*).

1. MN. 1:115-18.

2. *Ibid.*

3. MLS. 2:226. "Ime ca, ṭhapati, akusalasaṃkappā kiṃ samuṭṭhānā? Samuṭṭhānā pi nesaṃ vuttaṃ. Saññāsamuṭṭhānā ti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Katamā saññā? Saññā pi hi bahu anekavidhā nānappakārikā, kāmasaññā byāpādasaññā vihiṃsā saññā; itosamuṭṭhānā akusalasaṃkappā." MN. 2:27.

Engaged in this sensual search the worldling practices wrongly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind. The same pattern is repeated for intentions of ill will and intentions of harming.[1]

Beyond these three, other minor types of unwholesome thoughts are spoken of in an unspecified way as "evil unwholesome thoughts" (*pāpakā akusalā vitakkā*). The Buddha declares that the suppression and elimination of all unwholesome thoughts and intentions is one of the essential disciplines of the spiritual life. He says that a monk in training

> ... wisely reflective, does not give in to thought about sense pleasures that has arisen, he gets rid of it, he eliminates it, makes an end of it, sends it to its ceasing; he does not give in to malevolent thought... to thought of harming... to evil unskilled mental objects that have constantly arisen, he gets rid of them, eliminates them, makes an end of them, sends them to their ceasing.[2]

He also states that when unwholesome perceptions arise in a recluse or brahmin, if he does not quickly dispel them and eliminate them "he both fares ill here, with trouble, despair, yearning, and at the separation of the body, after death, has to expect a bad destiny."[3]

In striving for *jhāna*, a yogin will have to eliminate all unwholesome *vitakkas*. These will be the *vitakkas* associated with the five hindrances. The *vitakka* associated with the first hindrance, sensual desire, is clearly thought of sense pleasures. Thoughts of ill will and thoughts of harming will cluster around the hindrance of ill will. The *vitakkas* connected with the remaining hindrances can be seen as comprised in the "evil, unwholesome states" which a monk has to overcome in the course of his training. The texts record several minor distracting thoughts as "thoughts about relatives, thoughts about one's district, and thoughts about one's reputation."[4] The Buddha declares that all unwholesome thoughts cease without remainder in the first *jhāna*, the practice for eliminating unwholesome thoughts being the four right endeavors – the endeavor to abandon arisen unwholesome states, to prevent unarisen unwholesome states from arising, to arouse unarisen wholesome states, and to develop arisen wholesome states.[5]

Kusala Vitakka

Kusala vitakka or wholesome thought occurs at three levels:

(a) the wholesome thought of ordinary morally virtuous states of consciousness,

(b) the wholesome thought of the first *jhāna*, and

1. KS. 2:105-106. SN. 2:150-51.

2. MLS. 1:15. "… paṭisamkhā yoniso uppannaṃ kāmavitakkaṃ nādhivāseti pajahati vinodeti byantikaroti anabhāvam gameti,… byāpādavitakkaṃ…, vihiṃsāvitakkaṃ… uppannuppanne pāpake akusale dhamme nādhivāseti pajahati vinodeti byantikaroti anabhāvaṃ gameti." MN. 1:11.

3. KS. 2:106. SN. 2:152.

4. GS. 1:232. "Ñātivitakko janapada vitakko anavaññatti paṭisaṃyutto vitakko." AN. 3:254.

5. MN. 2:27.

(c) the wholesome thought of the supramundane path consciousness present as noble right intention (*ariya sammā saṃkappa*).

Ordinary kusala vitakka

Vitakka becomes wholesome in association with the three wholesome roots, of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion. Kammically wholesome thoughts that do not directly involve a higher spiritual experience are analyzed in the suttas as threefold: thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhammavitakka*), thoughts of benevolence (*abyāpādavitakka*), and thoughts of harmlessness (*avihiṅsāvitakka*). These three are the direct antitheses of the three unwholesome thoughts. The thought of renunciation opposes the thought of sensuality, the thought of benevolence the thought of ill will, the thought of harmlessness the thought of harming. The Buddha explains that when he was a Bodhisatta he established a category of wholesome thoughts into which he put the three thoughts of renunciation, benevolence, and harmlessness. He understood that these thoughts conduce neither to the harm of oneself, to the harm of others, or to the harm of both, that they lead to the growth of wisdom, to freedom from vexation, and to the attainment of *nibbāna*. Moreover, he declares, by thinking and pondering on the thought of renunciation one can expel thoughts of sensuality; by thinking thoughts of benevolence one can expel thoughts of ill will; and by thinking thoughts of harmlessness one can expel thoughts of harming.[1]

Wholesome thoughts are also spoken of in the suttas under the name "wholesome intentions" (*kusalasaṃkappa*), which are of the same threefold nature.[2] The Buddha declares that the intention of renunciation originates from the perception of renunciation (*nekkhammasaññā*). It issues in the desire for renunciation (*nekkhammacchanda*), the yearning for renunciation (*nekkhammapariḷāha*), and the search for renunciation (*nekkhammapariyesanā*). Engaged in this search the noble disciple practices rightly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind. The same pattern is repeated for intentions of benevolence and harmlessness.[3]

In the Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta the Buddha recommends five methods of using wholesome thoughts (*kusalavitakka*) to overcome unwholesome thoughts (*akusalavitakka*), here classified by way of their roots as connected with desire, hatred, and delusion. One method involves applying a wholesome thought to eliminate the unwholesome thought directly opposed to it:

> Like an experienced carpenter or carpenter's apprentice, striking hard at, pushing out, and getting rid of a coarse peg with a fine one, should the bhikkhu in order to get rid of the adventitious object, reflect on a different object which is connected with skill. Then the evil unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate and delusion are eliminated; they disappear. By

1. MLS. 1:150. MN. 1:116.

2. MLS. 2:227. MN. 2:27.

3. KS. 2:106. SN. 2:151-52.

their elimination, the mind stands firm, settles down, becomes unified, and concentrated, just within (his subject of meditation).[1]

The other four ways of overcoming unwholesome thoughts are

(i) pondering on their disadvantages (*ādīnava*),

(ii) trying not to pay any attention to them,

(iii) reflecting on the removal of the [thought] source of those unskilful thoughts, and

(iv) with clenched teeth and tongue pressing the palate, restraining, subduing, and beating down the [evil] mind by the [good] mind.[2]

This advice is given to a bhikkhu who is training himself to attain the higher consciousness (*adhicitta*), an equivalent term for *jhāna*. When unwholesome thoughts arise from time to time hindering his progress, he can develop wholesome thoughts to overcome them. The commentary explains that he should reflect on an unlovely object (*asubhanimitta*) in order to overcome lustful thought connected with living beings and on impermanence in order to overcome thoughts of desire connected with inanimate objects. He should cultivate loving kindness in order to overcome hatred towards living beings and on the modes of materiality (*dhātumanasikāro*) to overcome hatred towards inanimate objects.[3]

Kusalavitakka in jhāna

The general function of *vitakka*, as we have seen, is to direct the mind and its associated factors onto the object. In *jhāna* this function becomes stronger and more pronounced than on other occasions. On occasions of *jhānic* consciousness it would perhaps be more exact to say that *vitakka* thrusts its concomitants into the object rather than that it directs them onto the object. The *Visuddhimagga* thus characterizes the function of *jhānic vitakka* to be "to strike at and thresh – for the meditator is said, in virtue of it, to have the object struck at by applied thought, threshed by applied thought."[4]

---

1. Soma Thera, Comp. trans. and ed., *The Removal of Distracting Thoughts*, *Vitakka-Saṇṭhāna Sutta. A Discourse of the Buddha* (*Majjhima-Nikāya No. 20*). (Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1960), p. 1. "Seyyathāpi bhikkhave dakkho palagaṇḍo vā palagaṇḍantevāsī vā sukhumāya āṇiyā olārikaṃ āṇiṃ abhinīhaneyya, abhinivajjeyya – evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave bhikkhuno yaṃ nimittaṃ āgamma yaṃ nimittaṃ manasikaroto uppajjanti pāpakā akusalā vitakkā chandūpasaṃhitā pi, dosūpasaṃhitā pi mohūpasaṃhitā pi, tena bhikkhave bhikkhunā tamhā nimittā aññaṃ nimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ kusalūpasaṃhitaṃ; tassa tamhā nimittā aññaṃ nimittaṃ manasikaroto kusalūpasaṃhitaṃ ye pāpakā akusalā vitakkā chandūpasaṃhitā… te pahīyanti te abbhatthaṃ gacchanti, tesaṃ pahānā ajjhattaṃ eva cittaṃ santiṭṭhati sannisīdati ekodi hoti samādhiyati." MN. 1:119.

2. *Ibid.* 119ff.

3. Reflection on materiality (*dhātumanasikāra*) means the reflection on the elements of which all tangible objects are made. When one reflects on the basic material elements one would realize that no one particular element is responsible for the cause of his anger. This realization helps him eliminate hatred toward material objects.

4. PP., p. 148. "Āhanana-pariyāhananaraso, tathā hi tena yogāvacaro ārammaṇaṃ vitakkāhataṃ vitakkapariyāhataṃ karotī ti vuccati." Vism., p. 114.

In the context of *jhāna*, *vitakka* is qualified by another term, *appanā*, meaning absorption. The *Milindapañha* states this quality of absorption to be the salient characteristic of *vitakka*: "*Vitakka*, your majesty, has the characteristic of absorption. Just as a carpenter drives (*appeti*) a well-fashioned piece of wood into a joint so *vitakka* has the characteristic of absorption."[1] (Wr. tr.). Shwe Zan Aung makes explicit the distinction between *vitakka* in ordinary states of consciousness and *vitakka* on occasions of *jhāna* as follows:

> Ordinary *vitakka* merely throws its concomitants onto the surface, so to speak, of an object – i.e., it is the initiative element in cognition of a superficial kind. But *appana-vitakka* is mind penetrating into the inwardness or import of its object, and it has come to be applied to *samādhi*, 'concentration' or developed individualization of thought.[2]

Vitakka at the level of absorption is compared to a solid body, which sinks to the bottom of water and remains fixed there; the *vitakka* of ordinary consciousness is compared to a hollow ball which stays under the water when held down by pressure but rises to the surface when the pressure is removed.[3] The word *appanā* used to define *vitakka* comes to be applied to concentration of the *jhānic* level, called *appanā samādhi* or "absorption-concentration" in contrast to the pre-jhānic concentration called *upacāra samādhi* or "access concentration."

The object of *jhāna* into which *vitakka* thrusts the mind and its concomitants is the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*). We already met this object in our discussion of the suppression of the hindrances, but its nature must now be further clarified. When a meditator begins his practice for the attainment of *jhāna*, he takes a preliminary object such as a colored or elemental *kasiṇa* and concentrates on it until he is able to visualize it with his eyes closed as clearly as when he looks at it with eyes open. Whenever he notices that the object is not clear he should open his eyes and look at the object again until he is able to build up a clear mental impression of its mode of appearance. Then, remembering the appearance of the object, he should shut his eyes again and repeat the process of visualization as long as is required. When the object comes into focus when he attends to it with eyes shut as clearly as it does when he looks at it with open eyes the learning sign (*uggahanimitta*) is said to have arisen.[4] At this point the yogin should leave off the physical object and focus solely on the learning sign, developing it "by reiterated reaction to it and by striking at it with applied thought and sustained thought."[5]

1. "Appanālakkhaṇo mahārāja vitakko. Yathā mahārāja vaḍḍhakī suparikammakataṃ dāruṃ sandhismiṃ appeti, evaṃ kho mahārāja appanālakkhaṇo vitakkho'ti" V. Trenckner, ed. *The Milindapañho, Being Dialogues Between King Milinda and the Buddhist Sage Nagasena* (Pali Text Society Publication Series no. 69; London: Luzac & Co., for the Pali Text Society, 1880-1962), p. 62 (hereafter cited as Milp.).

2. *Compendium*, p. 57.

3. *Ibid*.

4. PP., p. 130. Vism., pp. 101-102.

5. PP., p. 130. Vism., pp. 101-102.

As he practices thus the *jhāna* factors grow in strength, each suppressing its respective hindrance. *Vitakka*, as we saw, counters the hindrance of sloth and torpor, eventually reducing it to a state of complete suppression. When the hindrances are suppressed and the defilements subside the mind enters access concentration. At this time the learning sign is replaced by the counterpart sign. The *Visuddhimagga* explains the difference between the two signs thus:

> In the learning sign any fault in the kasina is apparent. But the counterpart sign appears as if breaking out from the learning sign, and a hundred times, a thousand times, more purified, like a looking-glass disk drawn from its case, like a mother-of-pearl dish well washed, like the moon's disk coming out from behind a cloud, like cranes against a thunder cloud. But it has neither colour nor shape; for if it had, it would be cognizable by the eye, gross, susceptible of comprehension [by insight] and stamped with the three characteristics. But it is not like that. For it is born only of perception in one who has obtained concentration, being a mere mode of appearance.[1]

The counterpart sign is the object of both access concentration and *jhāna*. The difference between the latter two consists, not in their object, but in the strength of their respective *jhāna* factors. In the former the *jhāna* factors are still weak and not yet fully developed. In the latter they are developed to the point where they can actually thrust the mind into the object with the force of full absorption. In this process of thrusting, the factor most responsible for bringing about the mind's absorption in the counterpart sign is the factor of *vitakka*.

Since *vitakka* in *jhāna* is associated with the wholesome roots, it will take form as a wholesome thought of renunciation, of benevolence and of harmlessness. Its occurrence in these modes stems from the abandonment of the hindrances of sensual desire and ill will, the defilements responsible for the three unwholesome thoughts of sensuality, ill will, and harming. Since *vitakka* is needed to directly counter the hindrance opposite to itself, it performs the task of suppressing sloth and torpor. And since *vitakka* has the general function of directing the mind to the object, it will also thrust the mind into the counterpart sign, keeping it fixed and focussed there with the intensity of absorption-concentration.

Kusalavitakka in the Noble Path

The highest form of wholesome *vitakka* is the *vitakka* included in the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path, with its eight factors, operates at two levels – the mundane and the supramundane. The mundane (*lokiya*) path is developed on occasions of wholesome consciousness when the aspirant is striving to reach penetration of the

1. PP., p. 130. "Uggahanimitte kasiṇadoso paññāyati. Paṭibhāganimittaṃ, thavikato nihatādāsamaṇḍalaṃ viya, suddhotasaṅkhathalaṃ viya, valāhakantarā nikkhantacandamaṇḍalaṃ viya, meghamukhe balākā viya, uggahanimittaṃ padāletvā nikkhantaṃ iva tato satagunaṃ sahassaguṇaṃ suparisuddhaṃ hutvā upaṭṭhāti. Taṃ ca kho pana n'eva vaṇṇavantaṃ, na saṇṭhānavantaṃ. Yadi hi taṃ īdisaṃ bhaveyya, cakkhuviññeyyaṃ siyā oḷārikaṃ sammasanūpagaṃ tilakkhaṇabhāhataṃ. Na pan'etaṃ tādisaṃ. Kevalaṃ hi samādhilābhino upaṭṭhānākāramattaṃ saññājaṃ etan ti." Vism., p. 102.

Four Noble Truths and to eradicate defilements. The supramundane (*lokutara*) path arises when the practice is fully mature. When this path arises it penetrates the four truths by realizing *nibbāna* as its object, simultaneously eradicating defilements.

Wholesome *vitakka* figures on both levels of the noble path as *sammāsaṃkappa*, "right intention", the second factor of the path. At the mundane stage it is the threefold wholesome thought of renunciation, benevolence, and harmlessness. At the supramundane level it is the directive factor of consciousness which thrusts the mind upon its object, in this case *nibbāna*, the unconditioned element. The Buddha clarifies the twofold division of right intention in the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta as follows:

> And what, monks, is the right purpose that has cankers, is on the side of merit, and ripens unto cleaving? Purpose for renunciation, purpose for non-ill will, purpose for nonharming. This, monks, is right purpose that... ripens unto cleaving.
>
> And what, monks, is the right purpose that is ariyan, cankerless, supermundane, a component of the Way? Whatever, monks, is reasoning, initial thought, purpose, an activity of speech through the complete focussing and application of the mind in one who, by developing the ariyan Way, is of ariyan thought, of cankerless thought, and is conversant with the ariyan Way – this, monks, is right purpose that is ariyan, cankerless, supermundane, a component of the Way.[1]

Right intention in this latter sense is still a wholesome thought of renunciation, benevolence, and harmlessness, since it is associated with non-greed and non-hatred. Its primary characteristic, however, is its ability to lead the mind into absorption upon its supramundane object. Therefore it is this aspect which the Buddha emphasizes in his definition of the ariyan *sammāsaṃkappa*.

Vicāra

Although the word *vicāra* and its derivatives almost invariably appear in the suttas in conjunction with the word *vitakka* and its derivatives, the use of two distinct terms and the occasional recognition that one can occur without the other suggest that they represent different aspects of the thought-process. Since *vicāra* always comes after *vitakka* it would seem to be a more developed phase of thought, and this suspicion is borne out by the Abhidhamma and commentaries. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi defines *vicāra* thus:

---

1. MLS. 3:116. "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsaṃkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Nekkhammasaṃkappo, avyāpādasaṃkappo avihiṃsāsaṃkappo – ayaṃ, bhikkhave sammāsaṃkappo sāsavo puññaabhāgiyo upadhivepakko.

Katamo ca bhikkhave, sammāsaṃkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggassa samaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato takko vitakko saṃkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vācīsaṃkharo, ayaṃ bhikkhave sammāsaṃkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo." MN. 3:73.

The process, the sustained procedure (*vicāra*), the progress and access [of the mind] which on that occasion is the [continuous] adjusting and focusing of thought – this is discursive thought that there then is.[1]

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* and *Visuddhimagga* clarify this somewhat cryptic definition by analyzing *vicāra* in terms of its characteristic, function, and manifestation:

> Sustained thinking (*vicaraṇa*) is sustained thought (*vicāra*); continued sustainment (*anusañcaraṇa*), is what is meant. It has the characteristic of continued pressure on (occupation with) the object. Its function is to keep conascent [mental] states [occupied] with that. It is manifested as keeping consciousness anchored [on that object].[2]

From this explanation several features of *vicāra* emerge. Firstly, by way of etymology, *vicāra* connotes continued movement; thus it is the mind's continued movement in focussing upon the object. Secondly, by way of function, *vicāra* performs the task of fixing the mind and its states upon the object; it keeps them anchored there, sustaining the work of mental application effected by *vitakka*. And thirdly, *vicāra* plays the role of examination. Through its sustainment of the mind on the object it enables the mind to inspect, examine and investigate the object's properties. As Shwe Zan Aung says: "*Vicāra* is the continued exercise of the mind on that object."[3] And again: "*Vicāra* may largely operate in the stage of investigation and other processes, and would strongly operate in all processes of comparison or discrimination."[4]

The commentaries spell out the differences between *vitakka* and *vicāra* as follows:

> And though sometimes not separate, applied thought is the first impact of the mind in the sense that it is both gross and inceptive like the striking of a bell. Sustained thought is the act of keeping the mind anchored, in the sense that it is subtle with the individual essence of continued pressure, like the ringing of the bell.[5]

Buddhaghosa gives six analogies to illustrate the relationship between *vitakka* and *vicāra*.

1. *Vitakka* is analogous to the movement of a bird taking off into the air by flapping its wings, *vicāra* to its moving through the air gracefully and leisurely with outspread wings.

---

1. *Psy. Ethics*, p. 11. "Yo tasmiṃ samaye cāro vicāro anuvicāro upavicāro cittassa anusandhānatā anupekkhanatā. Ayaṃ tasmiṃ samaye vicāro hoti." Dhs., p. 18.

2. PP., p. 148. Vism., p. 114. "Vicaraṇaṃ va vicāro. Anusañcaranaṇti vuttaṃ hoti. Svāyaṃ ārammaṇānumajjanalakkhaṇo. Tatha sahajatānuyojana raso. Cittassa anuppabandhapaccupaṭṭhāno." Dhs.A., p. 158.

3. *Compendium*, p. 17.

4. *Ibid*., p. 40.

5. PP., p. 148. "Sante pi ca nesaṃ katthaci avippayoge, oḷārikaṭṭhena pubbaṅgamaṭṭhena ca ghaṇṭābhighāto viya cetaso paṭhamābhinipāto vitakko; sukhumaṭṭhena anumajjanasabhāvena ca ghaṇṭānuravo viya anuppabandho vicāro." Vism., p. 115.

2. *Vitakka* is comparable to a bee's flying towards a flower, *vicāra* to its buzzing around the flower.
3. *Vitakka* is like the striking of a bell, *vicāra* like its reverberation.
4. *Vitakka* is like the hand that holds firmly a tarnished metal dish that has to be cleaned; *vicāra* is like the other hand that rubs it with powder, oil, and a woolen pad.
5. *Vitakka* is like the supporting hand of a potter when he is making a pot, *vicāra* like the hand that moves back and forth.
6. *Vitakka* is like the compass pin that stays fixed to the center when one is drawing a circle, *vicāra* like the pin that revolves around.[1]

These similes make it clear that despite their constant concomitance, *vitakka* and *vicāra* perform different tasks, the former having a functional priority over the latter. *Vitakka* brings the mind to the object, *vicāra* fixes and anchors it there. *Vitakka* focuses the mind on the object, *vicāra* examines and inspects what is focussed on. *Vitakka* brings a deepening of concentration by again and again leading the mind back to the same object, *vicāra* sustains the concentration achieved by keeping the mind anchored on that object. In their union they are indispensable for the achievement and stabilization of the first *jhāna*.

Pīti

The third *jhāna* factor present in the first *jhāna* is *pīti*, usually translated "joy" or "rapture". The Venerable Ñānamoli, in his translation of the *Visuddhimagga*, renders it by "happiness", but this rendering seems misleading since most translators use "happiness" as an English equivalent for *sukha*, the quality of pleasurable feeling present in the *jhāna* as its fourth factor. We will render *pīti* by "rapture", thus maintaining the connection of the term with ecstatic meditative experience.

In the suttas *pīti* is sometimes said to arise from another aligned quality called *pāmojja*, translated as "joy" or "gladness." Thus the Buddha states that with virtuous rules of conduct as support, freedom from remorse (*avippaṭisāra*) arises; freedom from remorse leads to gladness, gladness to rapture, and rapture to tranquility (*passaddhi*).[2]

Again, he says that faith leads to gladness, gladness to rapture, and rapture to tranquility.[3] Gladness arises from seeing the abandonment of the hindrances. The Buddha says that when the disciple sees the five hindrances abandoned in himself "gladness (*pāmojja*) springs up within him on his realising that, and joy (*pīti*) arises to him thus gladdened, and so rejoicing all his frame becomes at ease."[4] Tranquility (*passaddhi*) follows rapture and leads to a feeling of happiness (*sukha*), on the basis of which the mind becomes concentrated, entering the first *jhāna*. Thus we can see that

1. *Ibid*.

2. GS. 5:5. AN. 5:4-5.

3. KS. 2:26-27. SN. 2:30

4. Dial. 1:84. DN. 1:73.

rapture precedes the actual arising of the first *jhāna*, but persists through the remaining stages and continues on as a *jhāna* factor up to the third *jhāna*.

For an analytic treatment of *pīti*, we must turn to the Abhidhamma piṭaka and the commentaries. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi defines the term thus:

> What on that occasion is joy (*pīti*)? The joy which on that occasion is gladness, rejoicing at, rejoicing over, mirth and merriment, felicity, exultation, transport of mind – this is the joy that there then is.[1]

The commentaries pinpoint *pīti* in terms of its verbal derivation, characteristic, function, and manifestation:

> It refreshes (*pīnayati*), thus it is [rapture]. It has the characteristic of endearing. Its function is to refresh the body and the mind, or its function is to pervade (thrill with rapture). It is manifested as elation.[2]

Rapture is closely associated with happiness (*sukha*), but remains different in nature. Happiness is a feeling and thus belongs to the aggregate of feelings (*vedanākkhandha*). Rapture, on the other hand, belongs to the aggregate of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*). It is not hedonic but directive, referring to the object of consciousness. Shwe Zan Aung explains that "*pīti* abstracted means interest of varying degrees of intensity, in an object felt as desirable, or as calculated to bring happiness."[3] When defined in terms of agency *pīti* is that which creates interest in the object; when defined in terms of its nature it is the interest created in the object. The Abhidhamma subcommentaries state: "It is said that *pīti* has, as its characteristic mark, grasping the object qua desirable."[4] Because it creates a positive interest in the object, the *jhāna* factor of *pīti* is able to counter and suppress the hindrance of ill will. Ill will is a state of aversion implying a negative evaluation of the object. When *pīti* as pleasurable interest arises in the object it supplants the negative tendency towards aversion.

Both the *Visuddhimagga* and *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* present a gradation of *pīti* into five categories: minor rapture (*khuddikā pīti*), momentary rapture (*khaṇikā pīti*), showering rapture (*okkantikā pīti*), uplifting rapture (*ubbegā pīti*), and pervading rapture (*pharaṇā pīti*).[5] Of these five types, minor rapture is said to be able to raise the hairs on the body. Momentary rapture is like lightning produced moment by moment. Flooding rapture descends on the body and disappears like the waves breaking on the seashore. Transporting rapture is able to lift the physical body and cause it to move from one place to another. All-pervading rapture pervades the whole body. To illustrate the power of uplifting rapture, the commentaries relate the story of the elder Mahātissa, who "aroused

1. *Psy. Ethics*, p. 12. "Katamā tasmiṃ samaye pīti hoti? Yā tasmiṃ samaye pīti pāmojjaṃ āmodanā pamodanā hāso pahāso vitti odagyaṃ attamanatā cittassa; ayaṃ tasmiṃ samaye pīti hoti." Dhs., p. 18.

2. PP., p. 149. "Pītisukhaṃ ti ettha pīnayati ti piti. Sā saṃpiyāyanalakkhanā; kāyacittapīnanarasā, pharaṇarasā vā; odagyapaccupaṭṭhānā." Vism., P. 115.

3. Compendium, p. 243.

4. "Ārammaṇaṃ kallato gahana lakkhaṇā ti vuttaṃ." *Three Ṭikas*, p. 75. [quoted in Compendium, p. 243].

5. PP., p. 149. Vism., pp. 115-16. Dhs.A., p. 158.

uplifting [rapture] with the Enlightened One as object, and rose into the air like a painted ball bounced off a plastered floor."[1] They also relate the story of a young girl who aroused uplifting rapture while contemplating the thought of a shrine and travelled to the shrine through the air, arriving before her parents who went there by foot.[2]

The five kinds of rapture are evidently ranked in degrees of intensity, minor rapture representing the weakest degree and all-pervading rapture the strongest. The five in sequence bring about the gradual perfection of concentration:

> Now this fivefold [rapture], when conceived and matured perfects the twofold tranquility, that is, bodily and mental tranquility. When tranquility is conceived and matured, it perfects the twofold bliss, that is, bodily and mental bliss. When bliss is conceived and matured, it perfects the threefold concentration, that is, momentary concentration, access concentration, and absorption concentration.[3]

Minor rapture is generally the first to appear in the progressive development of meditation, coming into being as defilements subside and the meditator experiences indications of successful concentration. Momentary rapture comes next. Though stronger in its impact than the earlier grade, momentary rapture, as its name indicates, is still ephemeral and cannot be sustained for long. Showering rapture runs through the body, producing a great thrill but without leaving a lasting impact. Uplifting rapture is more sustained but still tends to disturb concentration. The form of rapture most conducive to the deepening of concentration is all-pervading rapture. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* describes the effect of this rapture thus: "When all-pervading rapture arises, the whole body is completely surcharged, blown like a full bladder or like a mountain cavern pouring forth a mighty flood of water."[4] The *Visuddhimagga* states that what is intended by the *jhāna* factor of rapture is this all-pervading rapture, "which is the root of absorption and comes by growth into association with absorption."[5]

---

1. PP., pp 149-50. Vism., p. 116. Dhs.A., pp. 158-59.

2. *Ibid*.

3. PP., p. 150. "Sā pan'esā pañcavidhā pīti gabbhaṃ gaṇhantī paripākaṃ gacchantī duvidhaṃ passaddhiṃ paripūreti, kāyapassaddhiṃ ca cittapassaddhiṃ ca. Passaddhi gabbhaṃ gaṇhantī paripākaṃ gacchantī duvidhaṃ pi sukhaṃ paripūreti, kāyikaṃ ca cetasikaṃ ca. Sukhaṃ gabbhaṃ gaṇhantaṃ paripākaṃ gacchantaṃ tividhaṃ samādhiṃ paripūreti, khaṇikasamādhiṃ, upacāra samādhiṃ, appanāsamādhiṃ ti." Vism., p. 117.

4. *Expositor*, 1:154. "Pharaṇa pītiyā pana uppannāya sakala sarīraṃ dhamitvā pūritavaṭṭi viya mahatā udakoghena pakkhandappatakucchi viya ca anuparipphātaṃ hoti." Dhs.A., p. 160.

5. PP., p. 151. "Tāsu yā appaṇā samādhissa mūlaṃ hutvā vaḍḍhamānā samādhisampayogamgatā pharaṇa pīti, ayaṃ imasmiṃ atthe adhippetā pītī ti." Vism., p. 117.

Sukha

The next *jhāna* factor is *sukha* (happiness). The word "*sukha*" is used both as a noun meaning "happiness", "ease", "bliss", or "pleasure", and as an adjective meaning "blissful" or "pleasant". The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* presents a number of canonical uses of the term: "sukha" can mean pleasurable feeling (*sukhavedanā*), the root of happiness (*sukhamūlā*), pleasurable object (*sukhārammaṇā*), a cause of happiness (*sukhahetu*), an objective station occasioning happiness (*sukhapaccayaṭṭhānā*), freedom from trouble (*abyāpajjha*), *nibbānic* happiness, etc.[1] In most contexts *sukha* means pleasurable feeling. When it is said "The arising of the Buddhas is *sukha*,"[2] *sukha* means root or basis of happiness. In the passage "Since, O Mahāli, form is *sukha*, falls and descends on *sukha*,"[3] the word signifies a pleasurable object. In the statement "Merit, monks, is a synonym for *sukha*,"[4] *sukha* means a cause of happiness. When it is said: "They know not *sukha* who see not Nandana,"[5] *sukha* signifies a station (or plane of existence) occasioning happiness. In the statement "These states constitute a *sukha* life in this very world,"[6] *sukha* means freedom from troubles. And in the phrase "*Nibbāna* is the supreme sukha,"[7] *sukha* is nibbanic happiness.

As a factor of the first *jhāna sukha* signifies felt happiness or pleasant feeling. The word is explicitly defined in this sense in the Vibhaṅga's analysis of the first *jhāna*: "Therein, what is happiness? Mental pleasure, mental happiness, the felt pleasure and happiness born of mind-contact, pleasurable and happy feeling born of mind-contact – this is called 'happiness'."[8] (Wr. tr.). The *Visuddhimagga* explains that happiness in the first *jhāna* has the characteristic of gratifying, the function of intensifying associated states, and as manifestation, the rendering of aid (to its associated states).[9]

To understand precisely the nature of the happiness present in the first *jhāna*, a brief discussion of the Buddhist analysis of feeling is necessary. Feeling (*vedanā*) is a mental factor present in all types of consciousness; that is, it is a universal concomitant of experience (*sabbacittasādhāraṇā cetasika*). Feeling has the characteristic of being felt (*vedayita lakkhaṇā*), the function of experiencing (*anubhavana rasā*), and as

---

1. *Expositor*, 1:52-53. Dhs.A., pp. 160-61.

2. Ambalangoda Polvatte Buddhadatta Mahathera, trans. and ed., *Dhammapadam*: *An Anthology of Sayings of the Buddha*. (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Apothecaries Co., n.d.), v. 104 (hereafter cited as Dhp.).

3. SN. 3:69.

4. AN. 4:89.

5. SN. 1:5,200.

6. AN. 4:382.

7. Dhp., vs. 203,204.

8. "Tattha katamaṃ sukhaṃ? Yaṃ cetasikaṃ sukhaṃ cetosamphassajaṃ sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ cetosamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā." Vibh., pp. 83-84.

9. PP., p. 151. Vism., p. 117.

manifestation the gratification of the mental factors (*cetasika-assādapaccupaṭṭhānā*).[1] It is invariably said to be born of contact (*phassa*). Contact is the coming together (*saṅgati*) of a sense object, a sense faculty, and the appropriate type of consciousness. When these three come together consciousness makes contact with the object. It experiences the affective quality of the object, and from this experience a feeling arises keyed to the object's affective quality.[2]

Since contact is of six kinds by way of the six sense faculties, feeling is also of six kinds corresponding to the six kinds of contact from which it is born. There is feeling born of eye-contact, feeling born of ear-contact, feeling born of nose, tongue, body, and mind-contact.[3] Feeling is also divided by way of its affective tone either into three or five classes. On the threefold division there is pleasant feeling (*sukhāvedanā*), painful feeling (*dukkhāvedanā*), and neither pleasant nor painful feeling (*adukkhamasukhā vedanā*), i.e., neutral feeling. The pleasant feeling may be subdivided into bodily pleasant feeling (*kāyika sukha*) called "pleasure" (*sukha*) and mental pleasant feeling (*cetasikasukha*) called "joy" (*somanassa*). The painful feeling may also be subdivided into bodily painful feeling (*kāyikadukkha*) called "pain" (*dukkha*) and mental painful feeling (*cetasikadukkha*) called "displeasure" (*domanassa*). In this system of classification the neutral feeling is called "equanimity" (*upekkhā*). Thus on the fivefold division we find the following five types of feeling: pleasure, joy, pain, displeasure, and equanimity.[4] According to the Abhidhamma, pleasure and pain are found only in association with body-consciousness, joy and displeasure only in association with mind-consciousness, and equanimity in association with both mind-consciousness and the other four classes of sense consciousness.[5]

The Vibhaṅga statement that the *sukha* of the first *jhāna* is mental happiness born of mind-contact means that it is a form of joy or *somanassa*. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha enumerates contrasting types of mental happiness: the happiness of the household life and that of monastic life, the happiness of sense pleasures and that of renunciation, happiness with attachments and taints and happiness without attachments and taints, worldly happiness and spiritual happiness, the happiness of concentration and happiness without concentration, etc.[6] Happiness associated with greed and directed to pleasurable forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangibles is sensual happiness (*kāmasukha*). Happiness associated with the wholesome roots produced by the renunciation of sensual enjoyments is spiritual happiness (*nirāmisasukha*) or the happiness of renunciation (*nekkhammasukha*). The happiness of *jhāna* is a spiritual happiness born of seclusion from sense pleasures and the hindrances (*pavivekasukha*). It is also a happiness of concentration (*samādhisukha*).

---

1. *Expositor*, 1:145f. Dhs.A. pp. 83-84.

2. MN. 3:242-43.

3. SN. 2:3.

4. MN. 1:398-400.

5. Narada, *Manual*, pp. 143ff.

6. AN. 1:80-81.

The Buddha shows that happiness is causally conditioned. It arises in the sequence of conditions issuing in liberation. In this sequence it follows rapture (*pīti*) and tranquility (*passaddhi*) and leads to concentration (*samādhi*). The Upanisā Sutta says: "Gladness is the supporting condition for rapture; rapture is the supporting condition for tranquility, tranquility for happiness, happiness for concentration."[1] (Wr. tr.). The commentary explains that "gladness" (*pāmojja*) represents the initial forms of rapture, "*pīti*" the stronger forms. "Tranquility" (*passaddhi*) is the calm that emerges through the subsiding of defilements; the happiness (*sukha*) to which it leads the commentary calls "the happiness preceding absorption"[2] and the subcommentary "the happiness pertaining to the access to *jhāna*".[3] The resulting concentration is the *pādakajjhāna*, the *jhāna* forming a basis for insight. From this we can infer that the happiness included in this causal sequence is the nascent *jhāna* factor of *sukha*, which begins to emerge in the access stage and reaches full maturity in the actual *jhāna* itself. But since *sukha* is always present whenever *pīti* is present, it follows that *sukha* must have arisen at the very beginning of the sequence. In the stage bearing its name it only acquires special prominence, not a first appearance. When happiness gains in force, it exercises the function of suppressing its direct opposite, the hindrance of restlessness and worry, which causes unhappiness through its agitating nature.

Pīti and *sukha* link together in a very close relationship, so that it may be difficult to distinguish them. Nevertheless the two are not identical states. *Sukha* always accompanies *pīti* but *pīti* does not always accompany *sukha*: "Where there is *pīti* there is *sukha* but where there is *sukha* there is not necessarily *pīti*."[4] (Wr. tr.). In the third *jhāna* there is *sukha* but no *pīti*. *Pīti*, as we noted, belongs to the aggregate of mental formations, *sukha* to the aggregate of feelings. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* explains *pīti* as "delight in the attaining of the desired object" and *sukha* as "the enjoyment of the taste of what is acquired." The text illustrates the difference between them by means of a vivid simile.

> Rapture is like a weary traveller in the desert in summer, who hears of, or sees water or a shady wood. Ease is like his enjoying the water or entering the forest shade. For a man who, travelling along the path through a great desert and overcome by the heat, is thirsty and desirous of drink, if he saw a man on the way, would ask, 'Where is water?' The other would say, 'Beyond the wood is a dense forest with a natural lake. Go there, and you will get some.' He hearing these words would be glad and delighted, and as he went would see lotus leaves, etc., fallen on the ground and become more glad and delighted.

1. "Pāmojjūpanisā pīti; pītūpanisā passaddhi; passaddhūpanisaṃ sukhaṃ; sukhūpaniso samādhi." SN. 2:30.

2. "Appanāya pubbabhāgasukhaṃ." Buddhaghosa, [*Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*] *Sāratthappakāsinī Nāma Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script], 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1957), 2:50 (hereafter cited as SN.A.).

3. "Upacārajjhānasahitasukhaṃ." Dhammapāla, [*Saṃyutta Nikāya Tīka*] *Saṃyuttaṭikā* (Pāli Text in Burmese script] 2 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasānana Samiti, 1961), 2:65 (hereafter cited as SN.T.).

4. "Yattha pīti tattha sukhaṃ yattha sukhaṃ tattha na niyamato pīti." Vism., p. 117. Dhs.A., p. 160.

> Going onwards, he would see man with wet clothes and hair, hear the sounds of wild fowl and pea-fowl, etc., see the dense forest of green like a net of jewels growing by the edge of the natural lake, he would see the water lily, the lotus, the white lily, etc., growing in the lake, he would see the clear transparent water, he would be all the more glad and delighted, [118] would descend into the natural lake, bathe and drink at pleasure and, his oppression being allayed, he would eat the fibres and stalks of the lilies, adorn himself with the blue lotus, carry on his shoulders the roots of the mandalaka, ascend from the lake, put on his clothes, dry the bathing cloth in the sun, and in the cool shade where the breeze blew ever so gently lay himself down and say: 'O bliss! O bliss!' Thus should this illustration be applied: The time of gladness and delight from when he heard of the natural lake and the dense forest till he saw the water is like rapture having the manner of gladness and delight at the object in view. The time when, after his bath and drink he laid himself down in the cool shade, saying, 'O bliss! O bliss!', etc., is the sense of ease grown strong, established in that mode of enjoying the taste of the object.[1]

Pīti and *sukha* co-exist in the first *jhāna*. Therefore the commentarial simile should not be taken to imply that the two are mutually exclusive. Its purport is to suggest that *pīti* gains prominence before *sukha*, for which it helps provide a causal foundation.

In the description of the first *jhāna*, *pīti* and *sukha* are said to be "born of seclusion." The Vibhaṅga elaborates: "They are born, well born, come into existence, come well into existence, appear in this seclusion. Therefore 'born of seclusion' is said."[2] (Wr. tr.). The rapture and happiness born of seclusion, the Buddha states, suffuse the whole body of the meditator in such a way that there is no part of his body which remains unaffected by them. This he explains with the help of the following illustration:

> Monks, take the case of a monk, who, aloof from sensuous appetites, enters and abides in the first *jhāna*; he steeps and drenches and fills and suffuses this body with zest [rapture] and ease [happiness] born of solitude, so that there is not one particle of the body that is not pervaded by this lone-born zest [rapture] and ease [happiness]. Monks, just as a handy bathman or attendant might strew bath powder in some copper basin and gradually sprinkling water, knead it together so that the bath-ball gathered up the moisture, became enveloped in moisture and saturated both in and out, but did not ooze moisture, even so a monk steeps, drenches fills and suffuses this body with zest and ease born of solitude, so that there is not one particle of the body that is not pervaded by this lone-born zest [rapture] and ease [happiness].[3]

---

1. *Expositor*, 1:155-56. Dhs.A., pp. 160-61.

2. "Te imasmiṃ viveke jātā honti, sañjātā nibbattā, abhinibbattā, pātubhūtā. Tena vuccati vivekajanti." Vibh., p. 267.

3. GS. 3:17-18. "So imaṃ eva kāyaṃ vivekajena pītisukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripureti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa vivekajena pītisukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti. Seyyathāpi bhikkhave dakkho nahāpako vā nahāpakantevāsī vā kaṃsathāle nahāniya cuṇṇāni okiritvā udakena paripphosakaṃ paripphosakaṃ sanneyya, sā'ssa nahāniya piṇḍi snehānugatā snehaparetā sāntarabāhirā phutā snehena na

This statement raises the question how mental qualities like rapture and happiness can suffuse a physical substance like the body. The subcommentary provides an answer. It says that "the material form produced by consciousness suffuses every area where there is material form produced by *kamma*."[1] (Wr. tr.). The "material form produced by *kamma*" is the yogi's physical body. The physical body contains material phenomena of four modes of origination; that is, material phenomena produced by *kamma* (*kammajaṃ rūpaṃ*), by consciousness (*cittajaṃ rūpaṃ*), by temperature (*utujaṃ rūpaṃ*), and by food (*āhārajaṃ rūpaṃ*).[2] When the yogin attains to *jhāna*, the *jhāna* consciousness produces a subtle kind of material form which suffuses his physical body. Since this material form is produced by a consciousness associated with rapture and happiness, the impression is created that rapture and happiness themselves suffuse the whole physical body.

Ekaggatā

Unlike the previous four *jhāna* factors, *ekaggatā* or one-pointedness is not specifically mentioned in the standard formula describing the first *jhāna*. This omission has led some scholars to question the legitimacy of including one-pointedness among the *jhāna* factors. However, a more thorough examination of the canon and commentaries reveals this suspicion to be groundless.

Though one-pointedness is not found in the standard suttanta description of the first *jhāna* it is set forth as a factor of the *jhāna* in the Mahāvedalla Sutta where the Venerable Sāriputta states: "The first meditation is five-factored: if a monk has entered on the first meditation there is initial thought and discursive thought and rapture and joy and one-pointedness of mind. Thus, your reverence, is the first meditation five-factored."[3] Further, in the Anupada Sutta one-pointedness is also said to be present in the first *jhāna*, coming fifth in a list of constituent factors immediately preceded by the four familiar *jhāna* factors.[4]

In the Abhidhamma the status of one-pointedness as a *jhāna* factor is well-established. The Vibhaṅga, in its chapter on the *jhānas*, states immediately after the standard *jhāna*

---

ca paggharati, evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave bhikkhu imaṃ eva kāyaṃ vivekajena pīti sukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa vivekajena pītisukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti." AN. 3:25. DN. 1:74.

1. "Yathāyathā kammajarūpaṃ tathā tathā cittajarūpassa abhibyāpanato, tenāha 'upādinnakasantatī'ti ādi." Dhammapāla, [*Dīgha Nikāya Ṭīkā*]. [Vol. 1:] *Sīlakkhandhavaggaṭīkā* [vol. 2:1 *Mahāvaggaṭīkā*; [vol. 3:] *Pāthikavaggaṭīkā*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960-61), 1:263 (hereafter cited as DN.T.).

2. Vism., pp. 526-29. Nārada, *Manual*, p. 302.

3. MLS. 1:354. "Paṭhamaṃ kho āvuso jhānaṃ pañcangikaṃ: Idh'āvuso paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ samāpannassa bhikkhuno vitakko ca vattati vicāro ca pīti ca sukhaṅ ca cittekaggatā ca. Paṭhamaṃ kho āvuso jhānaṃ evaṃ pañcangikaṃ ti." MN. 1:294.

4. See below, p. 153.

formula: "[First] *jhāna*: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukha cittass*'*ekaggatā*."[1] The medieval compendium *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* defines the wholesome consciousness of the first *jhāna* in exactly the same way.[2] Buddhaghosa too gives commentarial support to this position:

> Although the unification of mind is not actually listed among these factors in the (summary) version [beginning] "which is accompanied by application and sustained thought" [Vbh. 245], nevertheless it is mentioned [later] in the Vibhaṅga as follows: "'jhāna': it is applied thought, sustained thought, happiness, bliss, unification" [Vbh. 257], and so it is a factor too: for the intention with which the Blessed One gave the summary is the same as that with which he gave the exposition that follows it.[3]

Thus the suttas, the Abhidhamma, and the commentaries – our three authorities – all support the inclusion of *ekaggatā* as a *jhāna* factor. It may be that the prominence of *ekaggatā* in the attainment of *jhāna* was so evident that it was felt unnecessary to mention it separately.

A formal definition of *ekaggatā* in terms of its synonyms is given in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi:

> What on that occasion is self-collectedness [one-pointedness] (*cittass 'eka-ggatā*)? The stability, solidity, absorbed steadfastness of thought which on that occasion is the absence of distraction, balance, imperturbed mental procedure, quiet, the faculty and the power of concentration, right concentration – this is the self-collectedness [one-pointedness] that there then is.[4]

In this definition "stability" (*ṭhiti*) indicates the mind's ability to stand unshaken on its object, an ability present to some degree in every state of consciousness as a requisite for focussing upon a single object. Shwe Zan Aung points out that *ekaggatā* is in reality

> that state of mind which is conscious of one and only one object, because it is not distracted by a plurality of possible objects... It is the fact in (a given state of) consciousness, of having a single point (eka-agga) as object. In other words, it is the germ of all attentive, selective, focussed, or concentrated consciousness.[5]

---

1. Vibh., p. 274.

2. Nārada, *Manual*, p. 42.

3. PP., p. 153. "Tattha cittekaggatā kiñcāpi, savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ ti imasmiṃ pāṭhe na niddiṭṭhā, tathāpi Vibbaṅge 'Jhānanti vitakko vicāro pīti sukhaṃ cittekaggatā'ti [Vbh. 257] evam vuttattā aṅgaṃ eva. Yena hi adhippāyena Bhagavatā uddeso kato, so yeva tena Vibhaṅge pakāsito ti." Vism., p. 119.

4. *Psy. Ethics*, pp. 13-14. "Katama tasmiṃ samaye cittassekaggatā hoti? Yā tasmiṃ samaye cittassa ṭhiti, saṇṭhiti avaṭhiti avisāhāro, avikkhepo avisāhatamānasā samatho samādhindriyaṃ samādhibalaṃ sammā samādhi, ayaṃ tasmiṃ samaye cittassekaggatā hoti." Dhs., p. 19.

5. *Compendium*, p. 241.

As giving this ability *ekaggatā* is listed among the universal concomitants of consciousness (*sabbacittasādhāraṇa*).[1]

As a universal mental concomitant, *ekaggatā* is present in unwholesome consciousness as well as wholesome, but its function there is not strong. It is constantly being undermined by the defilements and hindrances, most notably by restlessness (*uddhacca*), a mental factor common to all unwholesome states of mind. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* illustrates the difference between unwholesome and wholesome one-pointedness with the following simile:

> As by sprinkling a dusty place with water and smoothing it, the dust subsides only for a short time and again resumes its original condition whenever it is dry, so in the immoral portion, one-pointedness of mind is not strong. And as when we sprinkle a place with water poured from pots and dig it up with spades and cement it by beating, pounding and kneading, an image is reflected there as in a burnished glass, and the reflection is true any moment though a hundred years were to pass, so in moral [consciousness], one-pointedness of mind is strong.[2]

As a *jhāna* factor one-pointedness is always directed to a wholesome object. It serves to ward off unwholesome influences. In particular it is opposed to the hindrance of sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), which it counters and eliminates. As the hindrances are absent in *jhāna* one-pointedness acquires special strength, based on the previous sustained effort of concentrating the mind. Its stabilizing function is reinforced by the cooperation of the other *jhāna* factors. In the *jhāna* consciousness initial thought thrusts the mind upon the object, sustained thought keeps it anchored there, rapture and happiness encourage its interest and satisfaction in the object. The effect is that in *jhāna* one-pointedness picks up a stabilizing power which cannot be easily overcome by distracting influences. *Jhānic* one-pointedness is therefore also called the "power of concentration" (*samādhibala*). It brings the mind to a state of serenity (*samatha*) which helps mature the other spiritual faculties and acts as a foundation for liberating insight (*vipassanā*).

One-pointedness is used in the Pāli texts as a synonym for *samādhi* (concentration). In fact, as we pointed out above, *samādhi* is defined explicitly in the *Visuddhimagga* as wholesome one-pointedness of mind.[3] Buddhaghosa presents the etymology of *samādhi* in a way which suggests its identity with one-pointedness:

> It is the centering (*ādhāna*) of consciousness and consciousness concomitants evenly (*samaṃ*) and rightly (*sammā*) on a single object; placing is what is meant. So it is the state, in virtue of which consciousness and its concomitants

1. Narada, *Manual*, p. 77.

2. *Expositor*, 1:190. "Yathā hi rajuṭṭhānaṭṭhāne udakena sincitvā sammatthe thokameva kālaṃ rajo sannisīdati. Sukkhante sukkhante puna pakatibhāvena vuṭṭhāti. Evaṃ eva akusalapakkhe cittekaggatā na balavatī hoti. Yathā pana tasmiṃ ṭhāne ghaṭehi udakaṃ āsiñcitvā kudālena khaṇitvā ākoṭanamaddanaghaṭhanāni katvā upalitta ādāse viya chāyā paññāyati. Vassasatātikkamepi tammuhuttakaṃ viya hoti. Evaṃ eva kusalapakkhe cittekaggatā balavatī hoti." Dhs.A., p. 188.

3. PP., p. 84. "Kusalacittass'ekaggatā." Vism., p. 68.

> remain evenly and rightly on a single object undistracted and unscattered, that should be understood as concentrating.[1]

Concentration is explained as having the characteristic of non-distraction, the function of eliminating distractions, as its manifestation non-wavering. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭakathā* gives a somewhat different characterization of concentration. It says that concentration has the characteristic of leadership, the function of welding together the co-existent states as water kneads bath-powder into a paste, peace of mind or knowledge as its manifestation, and happiness as its proximate cause.[2]

The statement that happiness (*sukha*) is the proximate cause of concentration (*samādhi*) alludes to the causal sequence of spiritual development already discussed. In the Sāmaññaphala Sutta the Buddha says that when the yogi sees that the five hindrances are abandoned in him gladness (*pāmojja*) springs up. Out of gladness rapture (*pīti*) arises. The body of one filled with rapture becomes tranquil; one whose body is tranquil experiences happiness; the mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated.[3] Elsewhere the Buddha states that gladness and the remaining factors of the sequence arise in one whose senses are controlled and whose mind is not corrupted by cognizable sense objects.[4] Again he says that gladness, rapture, tranquility, happiness, and concentration spring up from freedom from remorse (*avippaṭisāra*) which is itself generated by observing pure principles of conduct (*kusalāni sīlāni*).[5]

From these passages we see that concentration, the one-pointedness of *jhānic* intensity, arises out of distinct conditions. Rapture produces calm or tranquility of body and mind, tranquility produces bodily and mental happiness, happiness in turn conduces to gaining complete one-pointedness, the fifth *jhāna* factor. When excitement is present in the form of the hindrances, one-pointedness is feeble and cannot reach the level of *samādhi*. But when the excitement of the hindrances subsides, joy and happiness arise leading to a deepening of concentration. This concentration exercises the task of overcoming sensual desire, the most subtle type of excitement.

The Buddha declares concentration to be the leader of all (wholesome) dhammas.[6] How this is so the Venerable Nāgasena illustrates with two picturesque similes:

> As all the rafters of the roof of a house, O king, go up to the apex, slope towards it, are joined on together at it, and the apex is acknowledged to be the top of all; so is the habit of meditation [*samādhi*] in its relation to other good qualities.

---

1. PP., p. 85. "Ekārammaṇe citta cetasikānaṃ samaṃ sammā ca ādhānaṃ; ṭhapanaṃti vuttaṃ hoti, tasmā yassa dhammassānubhāvena ekārammaṇe cittacetasikā samaṃ sammā ca avikkhepamānā avippakiṇṇā ca hutvā tiṭṭhanti, idaṃ samādhānanti veditabbaṃ." Vism., p. 68.

2. *Expositor*, 1:157. Dhs.A., pp. 161-62.

3. DN. 1:73.

4. SN. 4:78.

5. AN. 4:107.

6. AN. 4:107.

It is like a king, your Majesty, when he goes down to battle with his army in his fourfold array. The whole army – elephants, cavalry, war chariots and bowmen – would have him as their chief, their lines would incline towards him, lead up to him, they would be so many mountain slopes, one above another, with him as their summit, round him they would all be ranged.[1]

An Overview of the First Jhāna

Five mental states have been selected and designated by the Buddha as the factors of the first *jhāna*, but these five are not the only mental phenomena present in the *jhāna*. The first *jhāna* contains a great number of mental phenomena functioning together in unison as coordinate members of the first *jhāna* state of consciousness. Already in the Anupada Sutta the Buddha praises the analytical perspicacity of the Venerable Sāriputta in contemplating the multitude of factors belonging to the makeup of the *jhāna*:

> And those things which belong to the first meditation [*jhāna*]: initial thought and sustained thought and rapture and joy and one-pointedness of mind, impingement, feeling, perception, will, thought, desire, determination, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention, are uninterruptedly set up by him; known to him these things arise, known they persist, known they disappear.[2]

In the Abhidhamma literature this list is extended still further with great analytical detail. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi, the primary text of the canonical Abhidhamma, states that on the occasion of the first *jhāna* consciousness about sixty mental states are present. These represent a smaller number of factors spread out with repetitions over twelve general categories.[2] The synoptical *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, reducing this list to its essentials in terms of distinct mental factors, proposes a set of thirty-three concomitants always contained in the first *jhāna* consciousness. Thirteen are variable factors: seven – contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, the life-faculty, and attention – common to all states of consciousness, and six – applied thought, sustained thought, decision, energy, rapture, and desire – general non-universal variables. There are present as well the nineteen beautiful factors (*sobhana*) which accompany all wholesome mental states: faith, mindfulness, shame, moral dread, non-attachment, non-hatred, equanimity,

1. T. W. Rhys Davids, trans. and ed., *The Questions of King Milinda*. (The Sacred Books of the East, vol. 25; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1890), pp. 60-61 (hereafter cited as QKM.). "Yathā Mahārāja kūṭāgārassa yā kāci gopānasīso sabbe te kūṭaṃgamā honti kūṭa ninnā, kūṭasamosaraṇā, kūtaṃ tāsaṃ aggaṃ-akkhāyati, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja yekeci kusaladhammā sabbe te samādhi pamukhā honti samādhi ninnā, samādhi ponā samādhi pabbhārāti.

Yathā mahārāja, koci rājā caturaṅginī senāya saddhiṃ saṅgāmaṃ otareyya, sabbā va senā, hatthī ca assā ca rathā ca pattī ca tappamukhā bhaveyyuṃ tanninnā, tapponā tappabbhārā, taṃ yeva anupariyāyeyyuṃ, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja, ye keci kusaladhammā sabbe te samādhi pamukhā samādhi ninnā samādhi ponā samādhi pabbhārā." Milp., pp. 38-39.

2. MLS. 3:78. "Ye ca paṭhamajjhāne dhammā vitakko ca vicāro ca pīti ca sukhaṃ ca cittekaggatā ca phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittaṃ chando adhimokkho viriyaṃ sati upekkhā manasikāro, tyāssa dhammā anupadavavatthitā honti, tyāssa dhammā viditā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatthaṃ gacchanti." MN. 3:25.

tranquility of the (mental) body and the mind, lightness of the (mental) body and the mind, pliancy of the (mental) body and the mind, adaptability of the (mental) body and the mind, proficiency of the (mental) body and the mind, and rectitude of the (mental) body and the mind.[1] In addition the faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*) is always present in *jhāna*. The two illimitables, compassion (*karuṇā*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*), may also be present individually, thus bringing the total of states possible in the first *jhāna* up to thirty-five.[2] The divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) of loving kindness (*mettā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) are covered by the factors of non-hatred and equanimity, of which they represent certain intensifications.

Of all these states only five – *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā* – are called the factors of the first *jhāna*. The reason is that "when these are arisen *jhāna* is said to be arisen."[3] The *jhāna* is not something apart from these factors which possesses them but the constellation of these factors themselves:

> But just as 'The army with the four factors' and 'music with the five factors' and 'The path with the eight factors (eightfold path)' are stated simply in terms of their factors, so this too should be understood as stated simply in terms of its factors when it is said to have 'five factors' or 'possess five factors'.[4]

None of the factors, taken in separation from the rest, can constitute the first *jhāna*. For the *jhāna* to arise they all must be present together, exercising their special *jhānic* functions of inhibiting the hindrances opposed to themselves and of bringing the mind into absorption on the object. The five mental phenomena are only *jhāna* factors by virtue of these special functions. Ordinary *vitakka*, for example, is not a *jhāna* factor if it does not counter sloth and torpor. Sloth and torpor and *vitakka* can co-exist in many ordinary states of consciousness, but when *vitakka* is being developed towards attaining *jhāna* it expels and excludes the hindrance of sloth and torpor. Therefore the *vitakka* in *jhāna* is of a high quality and specialized function supporting concentration. Similarly for doubt and *vicāra*. *Vicāra* can be present in the mind while one is in a state of doubt, but as long as doubt is present *vicāra* cannot become a *jhāna* factor. When *vicāra* is directed to *jhāna* then it shuts out doubt. The same applies to the other three factors. No matter how strong rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness might become in a mind obsessed by the hindrances, they do not consititute the first *jhāna* until the hindrances are eliminated.

Each *jhāna* factor serves as support for the one which succeeds it. *Vitakka* must apply the mind to the object in order for *vicāra* to sustain and anchor it there. *Vicāra* supports

1. Narada. *Manual* pp. 77-78. "Phasso, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, ekaggatā, jīvitindriyaṃ, manasikāro, vitakko, vicāro, adhimokkho, viriyaṃ, pīti, chando; saddhā, sati, hiri, ottappaṃ, alobho, adoso, tatramajjhattatā, kāyapassaddhi, cittapassaddhi, kāyalahutā, cittalahutā, kāyamudutā. cittamudutā, kāyakammaññatā, cittakammaññatā, kāyapāguññatā, cittapāguññatā, kāyujjukatā, cittujjukatā." *Ibid*., p. 78.

2. *Ibid*., pp. 131-32.

3. PP., p. 152. Vism., p. 118.

4. PP., p. 152-53. Vism., p. 118.

the arising of rapture since it is only when the mind is anchored on the object that it can develop the interest needed for rapture to occur. As rapture grows and matures it brings to maturity happiness. This spiritual happiness, by providing an alternative to the fickle pleasures of the senses, encourages the growth of one-pointedness. Desire for sensual pleasure unsettles the mind, preventing the arising of concentration. As the mind begins to find rapture and happiness in a wholesome meditation object, sensual desire is reduced permitting concentration to become stronger. Even if there is no sensual desire in the mind, one-pointedness would not become strong if there were no happiness. In this way, as Nāgasena has explained, all the other wholesome states incline, slope, and lead towards concentration, which stands at their head like the apex on the roof of a house.

In order for a state of mind to qualify as a first *jhāna* state of consciousness the five *jhānic* factors must not only be able to inhibit and occlude the five hindrances, but must also be able to thrust the mind into the object with absorption intensity. If the factors are present only in part, if they are all present but lack sufficient strength to exclude the hindrances, if they can exclude the hindrances but cannot put the mind into absorption, the state of consciousness is not the first *jhāna*. But when they arise together performing their individual functions in the production of absorption, the first *jhāna* has arisen complete in its possession of five factors. The *Visuddhimagga* explains this cooperative endeavor culminating in *jhāna* thus:

> But applied thought directs the mind onto the object; sustained thought keeps it anchored there. Happiness produced by the success of the effort refreshes the mind whose effort has succeeded through not being distracted by those hindrances; and bliss intensifies it for the same reason. Then unification aided by this directing onto, this anchoring, this refreshing and this intensifying, evenly and rightly centers the mind with its remaining associated states on the object, consisting in unity. Consequently possession of five factors should be understood as the arising of these five, namely applied thought, sustained thought, happiness, bliss, and unification of mind. For it is when these are arisen that *jhāna* is said to be arisen, which is why they are called the five factors of possession.[1]

The Jhāna Thought-Process

The commentaries and later analytical treatises of the Theravāda tradition connect the process of *jhāna* attainment with the account of the cognitive process (*cittavīthi*) presented in the Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma analyzes experience into a succession

1. PP., p. 152. "Yasmā pana vitakko ārammaṇe cittaṃ abhiniropeti, vicāro anuppabandhati, tehi avikkhepāya sampāditapayogassa cetaso payogasampattisambhavā pīti pīṇanaṃ, sukhaṃ ca upabrūhanaṃ karoti, atha naṃ sāsesasampayuttadhammaṃ etehi abhiniropanānuppabandhanapīṇanānūpabrūhanehi anuggahitā ekaggatā ekattārammaṇe samaṃ sammā ca ādhiyati, tasmā vitakko, vicāro, pīti, sukhaṃ, cittekaggatā ti imesaṃ pañcannaṃ uppattivasena pañcaṅgasamannāgatatā veditabbā. Uppannesu hi etesu pañcasu jhānaṃ uppannaṃ nāma hoti. Ten'assa etāni pañca samannāgataṅgāni ti vuccanti." Vism., p. 118.

of discrete, causally connected occasions of consciousness called *cittas* or *citt'uppādas*. Each *citta* endures for only a small fraction of a second yet can still be divided into three stages: a stage of arising (*uppāda*) when it originates, a stage of duration (*ṭhiti*) during which it undergoes transformation, and a stage of dissolution (*bhaṅga*) when it breaks up and ceases, yielding to its immediate successor. *Cittas* succeed one another with such inconceivable rapidity that it is impossible for an average person to note the distinct mental moments. Experience as we know it is a coarse fusion of a multiplicity of *cittas* indiscernible in their uniqueness and discreteness.

According to the Abhidhamma philosophy, *cittas* do not occur in isolation but as parts of a series. These series are of two types. One is the passive stream of consciousness which functions as the underlying "limb of becoming," the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*). The second type is the process of active consciousness, by which clear perceptions are made, thoughts and volitions generated, and actions performed. This active process is called the *cittavīthi*.

The *bhavaṅga* or stream of consciousness is made up of a succession of *cittas* proceeding through beginningless time. With each new life the *bhavaṅga* springs up in the mother's womb at the moment of conception (in the case of human or animal life). It is rooted in ignorance (*avijjā*), supported by the desire to exist (*bhavataṇhā*), and given its specific form and character by the generative *kamma* of the past. Through the course of a lifetime it continues to function whenever the mind is free from active thought processes. It is most conspicuous in deep sleep, but it also occurs very briefly innumerable times during waking life between occasions of active perception and cognition.

When a sensory datum or idea impinges on the mind, the passive flow of the life continuum is interrupted. The mind then enters a phase of active consciousness, after which it returns to its passive state. The process of *jhāna* attainment occurs as such an active process of cognition. When the mind has been freed from the hindrances and fully prepared for the attainment of absorption-concentration (*appanā-samādhi*), the mind which has subsided into the life-continuum is stimulated to break out from it by the force of previous intention. This break consists of three moments. The first is simply the past moment of the life-continuum (*atītabhavanga*); the second is the vibration of the continuum (*bhavaṅga calana*), caused by the decisive intention; the third is the cutting off or arrest of the passive stream of consciousness (*bhavaṅga upaccheda*), as active consciousness is about to supervene. Immediately after this arrest moment the mind, well-impressed with the counterpart sign of the meditation subject, rises up in active form, adverting to the object and cognizing it through the "mind-door" (*manodvāra*), i.e., as an object of internal perception.

As the hindrances have been suppressed there arise next four or five moments of *javana*, i.e., apperceptive consciousness, that are associated with unusually intense *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā*. The first *javana* in this series is called "the preliminary work" (*parikamma*), since it prepares the mind for the first *jhāna*. In the case of a quick-witted meditator, the *parikamma* moment is skipped over and the series begins with the next moment. The second is called "access" (*upacāra*) as it brings the

mind to the neighborhood of *jhāna*. The third, called "conformity" (*anuloma*), qualifies the mind further for the *jhāna*. The fourth is called "change-of-lineage" (*gotrabhū*),[1] since with this act the stream of consciousness begins to cross over from the sense-sphere plane of consciousness (*kāmāvacara*) to the fine material plane (*rūpāvacara*) of *jhānic* consciousness. Immediately after this the *jhāna* consciousness arises. On the occasion of initial attainment it lasts for only one great thought-moment with its three phases of arising, duration, and dissolution. Then the *jhāna* thought passes away and the mind returns to the passive state of the life-continuum, since the first *jhāna* consciousness is close to the passive continuum.

This process can be made more vivid by the following diagram:

		A										B				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
bh	l	ch	m	p	u	a	g	jh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh

Here line *A* represents the four great thought moments preceding the *jhāna* process. This comprises the past stream of consciousness (*bh*), its vibration (*1*), its cutting off (*ch*), and the mind's advertance to the counterpart sign through the mind-door (*m*). Line *B* represents the lapsing of the mind back into the passive stream of consciousness after the *jhāna* attainment is over. *P* represents the moment of preliminary work (*parikamma*), *u* the moment of access (*upacāra*), *a* the moment of conformity (*anuloma*) during which the mind qualifies itself for *jhāna*, and *g* the moment of change-of-lineage where the ordinary stream of consciousness belonging to the sensual sphere is replaced by the lineage of consciousness of the fine material sphere. The following *jh* represents the first *jhāna*. After this the mind relapses into the passive stream of consciousness (*bhavaṅga*) which is represented by *bh* repeated seven times. The groups of three dots in each *citta* represent the birth (*uppāda*), transformation or duration (*ṭhiti*), and dissolution (*bhaṅga*) of each thought moment.[2]

It is evident from this diagram that "absorption is only a single conscious moment" (*ekacittakkhaṇikā yeva*).[3] Unless the meditator masters this attainment by the five ways of mastery to be explained he cannot sustain it. Thus it initially lasts for only one moment before yielding to the life-continuum. But when the yogi has mastered the *jhāna*, a succession of *jhāna cittas* will continue on for as long as he determined before entering the attainment. Therefore if we were to represent this situation diagramatically we would find a repetition of *jh* rather than *bh* after the first *jh* in our diagram.

1. The Dakkhināvibhaṅga Sutta (MN. # 142) uses "*gotrabhū*" to mean a bhikkhu only by name. Also see MN.A. 4:225.

2. For an account of *jhāna* in relation to the *cittavīthi* see Nārada, *Manual*, pp. 214-19; Vism. pp. 111-12; *Compendium* pp. 54-55.

3. PP., p. 144. Vism., p. 112.

Perfecting the First Jhāna

The first *jhāna* is the initial stage of absorption. We have mentioned already that the elevated forms of concentration are divided into two basic levels, access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) and absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*). Access concentration is the concentration obtained when the hindrances have been suppressed and the mind has become focussed on the counterpart sign. Absorption concentration is the subsequent concentration which develops when the *jhāna* factors become manifest in full force, fixing the mind upon the sign to the degree of complete absorption. The difference between access and absorption lies in the relative strength of the *jhāna* factors. In access the factors are still weak, so that concentration is intermittent. Just as a young child, lifted to its feet, stands for a while and then falls down, the mind in access remains focussed on the sign for a short while and then falls away. In absorption the *jhāna* factors are strong and fully developed; thus the mind can remain continuously in concentration just as a healthy man can remain standing on his feet for a whole day and night.[1]

Absorption concentration is the concentration of the four *jhānas*, and access the concentration immediately preceding entrance upon the *jhānas*. Once the meditator gains access and the counterpart sign appears to him, he still has to strive to attain absorption. To develop his practice the *Visuddhimagga* recommends several essential measures, based on the testimony of the ancients. He has to live in a suitable dwelling place, rely upon a suitable alms resort, avoid profitless talk, associate only with spiritually-minded companions, make use only of suitable food, live in a congenial climate, and maintain his practice in a suitable posture.[2]

Beyond these measures the earnest yogi should rely on the ten kinds of skill in absorption.[3] The first is "making the basis clean," which means that he should clean his lodging and his physical body so that they conduce to clear meditation. The second is "balancing the spiritual faculties" (*indriyasamattapaṭipādana*). Of the five spiritual faculties, faith and wisdom must be balanced with each other, and energy and concentration must also be kept in balance; the fifth faculty, mindfulness, is always useful and has no opposite counterpart. Third, he must be skillful in producing and developing the sign of concentration. Measures four through seven involve exerting the mind (*paggaha*) on an occasion when it is slack and needs to be exerted, restraining it (*niggaha*) on an occasion when it is agitated and needs to be restrained, encouraging it (*sampahaṅsa*) when it is restless or dejected and needs encouragement, and looking on at the mind with equanimity (*ajjhūpekkhanā*) when all is proceeding well and interference is not needed. As an eighth measure the yogi should avoid distracting persons, as a ninth he should approach people experienced in *samādhi*, and lastly he should be firm in his resolution to achieve concentration.

---

1. PP., p. 131. Vism., p. 102.

2. PP., pp. 132-34. Vism., pp. 103-104.

3. PP., pp. 134-40. Vism., pp. 104-110.

After attaining the first *jhāna* a few times the meditator is not advised to set out immediately striving for the second *jhāna*. This would be a foolish and profitless spiritual ambition. Before he is prepared to make the second *jhāna* the object of his endeavor he must first bring the first *jhāna* to perfection. If he is too eager to reach the second *jhāna* before he has perfected the first he is likely to fail to gain the second *jhāna* and find himself unable to regain the first. The Buddha compares such a meditator to a foolish cow who, while still unfamiliar with her own pasture, sets out for new pastures. She gets lost in the mountains without gaining food or drink and cannot find her way back home.[1]

The perfecting of the first *jhāna* involves two steps of procedure: the extension of the sign and the achievement of the five masteries. The 'extension of the sign' (*nimitta-vaḍḍhana*) means extending the size of the object of *jhāna*, that is, the size of the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*). The meditator, before entering *jhāna*, should mentally determine the boundaries to which he wishes to extend the sign; then he should enter the *jhāna* and try to bring the sign to reach those boundaries. Beginning with a small area, the size of one or two fingers, he gradually learns to broaden the sign until the mental image can be made to cover the world-sphere or even beyond.[2]

Following this the meditator should try to acquire five kinds of mastery with respect to the first *jhāna*. These five masteries (*pañca vasiyo*) are: mastery in adverting, mastery in attaining, mastery in resolving, mastery in emerging, and mastery in reviewing.[3] Mastery in adverting is the ability to advert to the *jhāna* factors one by one after emerging from the first *jhāna*; the meditator must be able to advert to these factors wherever he wants, whenever he wants, and for as long as he wants. Mastery in attaining is the ability to enter upon *jhāna* quickly. Mastery in resolving is the ability to remain in the *jhāna* for exactly the pre-determined length of time. Mastery in emerging is the ability to emerge from the *jhāna* quickly, without difficulty. Mastery in reviewing is mastery in reviewing the *jhāna* and its factors by means of retrospective knowledge (*paccavekkhanañāṇa*) immediately after adverting to them. When the yogi has achieved this fivefold mastery, then he is ready to strive for the second *jhāna*.

1. AN. 4:418-19.

2. PP., pp. 158-59. Vism., p. 123.

3. The five are, respectively: *Āvajjanavasi*, *samāpajjanavasi*, *adhitthānavasi*, *vuṭṭhānavasi*, and *paccavekkhanavasi*. For a discussion see Vism., pp. 124-25. PP., pp. 160-61. The canonical source is the Pts., pp. 96-97.

Chapter Five

THE HIGHER JHĀNAS

Having dealt at length with the first *jhāna*, we can now turn to the remaining three members of the tetrad – the second, third, and fourth *jhānas*. As before, taking the stock descriptive formulas of the Pāli Canon as our starting point, we will examine these *jhānas* in terms of their process of attainment, factors, and additional concomitants. Our discussion will emphasize in particular the dynamic nature of the course by which the *jhānas* are achieved. The attainment of the higher *jhānas*, we will see, is a process whereby the grosser factors are successively eliminated and the subtler ones brought to greater prominence. From our examination it will become clear that the *jhānas* link together in a graded sequence of development, the lower serving as basis for the higher, the higher refining and purifying states already present in the lower. Finally we will close by considering the relationship between the fourfold scheme of *jhānas* used in the suttas and the fivefold scheme introduced in the Abhidhamma.

The Second Jhāna

The Attainment of the Second Jhāna

The formula for the attainment of the second *jhāna* runs as follows:

With the subsiding of applied thought and sustained thought he enters and dwells in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without applied thought and sustained thought, and is filled with rapture and happiness born of concentration.[1] (Wr. tr.).

As we saw, the first *jhāna* is to be attained by eliminating the factors to be abandoned and by developing the factors of possession. In the case of this first *jhāna* the factors to be abandoned are the five hindrances – sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. The factors of possession are the five *jhāna* factors – applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness. The attainment of the second *jhāna* repeats this same basic pattern, only raising it to a different and higher level. At this level the factors to be abandoned are the two initial factors of the first *jhāna* itself – applied thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*), the factors of possession are the three remaining *jhāna* factors – rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). Hence the formula begins "with the subsiding of applied thought and sustained thought," and then goes into the *jhāna*'s positive endowments.

1. "Vitakka vicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." DN. 1:74.

Before he can enter upon the practice for reaching the second *jhāna*, the meditator must first become thoroughly familiar with the first *jhāna* and perfect it through the five kinds of mastery – mastery in adverting, in resolving, in entering, in emerging, and in reviewing. Then, after achieving such mastery, he enters the first *jhāna*, emerges from it, and begins contemplating its defective features. These defects, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, are two: first the attainment is threatened by the nearness of the hindrances, and second, its factors are weakened by the grossness of applied and sustained thought.[1] The former we might call the defect of proximate corruption, the latter the inherent defect. Though the first *jhāna* is secluded from the hindrances, it is only a step removed from the non-*jhānic* consciousness and thus provides only a mild protection from the hindrances. If the yogin is not mindful his contacts with sense objects can incite the defilements and thereby bring the hindrances into activity once again. Pleasant objects tend to stimulate the hindrance of desire, unpleasant ones to stimulate ill will, all five hindrances tend to break out from the deep flow of the subconscious held in check only by the rudimentary force of concentration found in the first *jhāna*. To ensure himself of further protection from the hindrances the meditator realizes that a deeper level of absorption would be helpful. Thus he aspires to reach the second *jhāna* which is at a further remove from the hindrances.

The inherent defect of the first *jhāna* is its inclusion of *vitakka* and *vicāra*. When striving for the first *jhāna* these appeared to the yogin to be helpers in the struggle against the hindrances, *vitakka* directing the mind onto the object, *vicāra* anchoring it there preventing it from drifting away. But after mastering the first *jhāna* the meditator comes to see that *vitakka* and *vicāra* are relatively gross. They are gross in themselves, and also by reason of their grossness, they weaken the other factors. The rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness associated with applied and sustained thought, he sees, are not as powerful and peaceful as they would be if they were freed from applied and sustained thought. Hence he regards *vitakka* and *vicāra* as impediments needing to be eliminated. As the Buddha explains in the Poṭṭhapada Sutta[2], what the meditator previously perceived as subtle and actual subsequently appears to him to be gross and harmful. Then he eliminates it by attaining a higher *jhāna*.

The meditator thus comprehends that in spite of his mastery of the first *jhāna*, his progress is not fully satisfactory; the first *jhāna* – the cherished object of his early striving – itself turns out to be defective, corrupted by the proximity of the hindrances and by the grossness of its factors. He then calls to mind his theoretical knowledge of the second *jhāna*. He reflects that the second *jhāna* is free from *vitakka* and *vicāra*, that it is therefore more tranquil, subtle, and sublime than the first *jhāna*. While *vitakka* and *vicāra* appear gross, rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness appear peaceful. By so reflecting the meditator ends his attachment to the first *jhāna* and engages in renewed striving with the aim of reaching the second *jhāna*.

1. PP., p. 161. Vism., p. 125.

2. DN. I:178-203.

The meditator applies his mind to his meditation subject – a *kasiṇa* or the breath – repeatedly concentrating on it with the intention of overcoming applied thought and sustained thought. When his practice is sufficiently matured the second *jhāna* arises equipped with its three factors – rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness.

The thought process (*cittavīthi*) by which the second *jhāna* is attained is similar to that for the first *jhāna*. The process can be represented by the following diagram:

A									B							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
bh	l	ch	m	p	u	a	g	jh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh

The Second Jhāna Thought Process

Here the top line *A* represents the past moments of consciousness preceding the *jhānic* process and *B* the moments that follow the second *jhāna*, when the mind returns to its passive *bhavaṅga* state. Here *bh*=*bhavaṅga*; *l*=vibration (*bhavaṅga calana*); *ch*=break off (*bhavaṅga upaccheda*); *m*=mind-door adverting (*manodvārāvajjana*); *p*=moment of preliminary work (*parikamma*); *u*=moment of access (*upacāra*); *a*=moment of conformity (*anuloma*); *g*=moment of change-of-lineage (*gotrabhū*); and *jh*=second *jhāna*. Again, in the case of a quick-witted meditator, the moment of preliminary work (*parikamma*) is not found for the reason that he can bypass it and go directly to access.[1]

From this diagram it is seen that the cognitive process issuing in the second *jhāna* centers on four preliminary moments plus the moment of the *jhāna*. These four moments gain the general designation "access concentration" (*upacāra samādhi*), though technically speaking only one is singled out as the moment of access. An important difference obtains between these access moments leading into the second *jhāna* and the moment of *jhāna* itself. Whereas the second *jhāna* moment is free from *vitakka* and *vicāra*, the latter are still present in all four preliminary moments. Only in the moment of absorption concentration of the second *jhāna* are *vitakka* and *vicāra* totally eliminated.

After stating that the yogin enters and abides in the second *jhāna* through the subsiding of applied and sustained thought (*vitakka-vicārānaṃ vūpasamā*), later in the descriptive formula the Buddha says that the second *jhāna* is "without applied thought and sustained thought" (*avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ*). This phrase appears at first sight to be an unnecessary repetition of the first, but the *Visuddhimagga* defends this choice of wording, showing that the second phrase is not redundant but fulfills a different function. The commentator points out that the opening phrase is stated, firstly, in order to show directly that the second *jhāna* is attained through the surmounting of the gross factors of the first *jhāna*; secondly, that the internal confidence and unification of mind, mentioned immediately afterwards, come about with the act of stilling applied and sustained thought, and thirdly, that this *jhāna* is without applied and sustained thought,

1. The diagrams for the third and fourth *jhānas* also are similar to this with the exception that the *jh* signifies the third and fourth *jhāna* as the case may be. See Nārada, *Manual*., pp. 216-18.

not through their bare absence as in the higher *jhānas* or in elementary sense consciousness, but through their actual stilling. But the first phrase does not state blankly that the second *jhāna* is devoid of applied and sustained thought. To make this latter meaning explicit a separate phrase is needed; hence the words "without applied thought and sustained thought."[1]

Because the second *jhāna* is free from *vitakka* and *vicāra* it is called the "noble silence." Once when the Venerable Moggallāna was meditating in seclusion he wondered "What is it that we call 'noble silence' (*ariyo tunhībhāvo*)"? Then it occured to him:

> When with the subsiding of applied thought and sustained thought a bhikkhu enters and abides in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without applied thought and sustained thought, and is filled with rapture and happiness born of concentration, then this is what we call noble silence.[2] (Wr. tr.).

Vitakka and *vicāra* are as we saw, conditions causing vocal activity (*vacīsaṅkhāra*). As the Cūḷavedalla Sutta says: "Having first had applied thought and sustained thought one subsequently breaks out into speech; therefore applied and sustained thought are activity of speech."[3] When *vitakka* and *vicāra*, the springs of verbal activity, come to a stop inner mental verbalization also comes to a stop, replaced by a profound inward silence of the mind. Since this stilling of *vitakka* and *vicāra* occurs at the level of the second *jhāna*, the *jhāna* acquires the name "noble silence."

***Internal Confidence* (*ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ*)**

With the subsiding of applied and sustained thought the mind of the meditator gains internal confidence (*ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ*). The term *sampasādana*, which we translate as "confidence", signifies the factor of faith (*saddhā*). As it is said in the Vibhaṅga: "'Confidence': faith, the placing of faith, trust, conviction."[4] Since faith, according to the Abhidhamma, is present in every wholesome state of consciousness, it must also be present in the first *jhāna*. However, in the first *jhāna* the meditator's faith is not well established due to the presence of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, which produce thought waves obstructing the emergence of full clarity and serenity. Thus because this faith lacks full clarity and serenity it is not called "confidence". The *Visuddhimagga* explains:

---

1. PP., pp. 163-64. Vism., p. 130.

2. "Idha mayhaṃ āvuso rahogatassa patisallīnassa evaṃ cetaso parivitakko udapādi. Ariyo tuṇhībhāvo ariyo tuṇhībhāvoti vuccati, katamo nu kho ariyo tuṇhībhāvo? Tassa mayhaṃ āvuso etadahosi: 'Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pīti sukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. Ayaṃ vuccati ariyo tuṇhībhāvo'ti." SN. 2:273.

3. MN. 1:301.

4. Vibh., p. 268.

> The first *jhāna* is not fully confident owing to the disturbance created by applied and sustained thought, like water ruffled by ripples and wavelets. That is why, although faith does exist in it, it is not called 'confidence'.[1]

When *vitakka* and *vicāra* are made to subside the mind of the meditator becomes very clear and peaceful. Then his faith takes on the quality of "full internal confidence." To indicate this maturation of faith through the stilling of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, "internal confidence" is mentioned in the description of the second *jhāna* but not in that of the first.

Faith (*saddhā*) or confidence (*pasāda*) is a necessary factor in the development of the Buddhist spiritual path and a very important aid to the progress of meditation. In the suttas confidence is seen to arise in three crucial stages – first at the time of listening to the Dhamma, second with the attainment of the second *jhāna*, and third with the attainment of stream-entry (*sotāpatti*). In each case confidence arises only when the mind is settled and free from wavering.

The first stage of faith is illustrated by the stock canonical passage: "A householder or a householder's son or one born in another family hears that Dhamma. Having heard that Dhamma he gains faith in the Tathāgata."[2] The faith gained by hearing the Dhamma of the Tathāgata functions as the germ for all higher achievements. It leads to the going forth into the monastic life, the training in morality, concentration, and wisdom, and the achievement of the *jhānas* and stages of deliverance. Thus the Buddha says that "faith is the seed" (*saddhā bījaṃ*).[3] The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* calls faith the "forerunner" (*pubbangamā*) and "precursor" (*purecārikā*): "So faith is the forerunner, the precursor to one who is giving gifts, observing the precepts, performing sabbath duties and commencing culture."[4]

The faith that emerges in the second *jhāna* is indicated by the term "internal confidence" (*ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ*). The word *sampasādana* has two connotations: one is faith in the sense of belief, trust, or conviction; the other is tranquility and serenity. We find the first indicated in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, where it is said: "I myself, lord, from this day forth whatever faith I had in those fools the unclothed – I winnow it away in a strong wind, or I let it be carried away by a swiftly flowing river."[5] The second is intended in the following statement of the Dīgha Nikāya: "And seeing the tranquility of the gods of the community of the thirty-three he expressed his pleasure in these verses."[6] Both these

1. PP., p. 163. "Paṭhamajjhānaṃ vitakkavicārakkhobhena, vicitarangasamākulaṃ iva jalaṃ, na suppasannaṃ hoti, tasmā satiyā pi saddhāya sampasādanaṃ ti na vuttaṃ." Vism., pp. 126-27.

2. MLS. 1:224. MN. 1:179.

3. SN. 5:77.

4. *Expositor*, 1:158. "Evaṃ eva dānaṃ dadato sīlaṃ rakkhato uposathakammaṃ karoto bhāvanaṃ ārabhato saddhā pubbaṃgamā purecārikā hoti." Dhs.A., p. 163.

5. GS. 2:211. "Esāhaṃ bhante ajjatagge yo me bālesu nigaṇṭhesu sampasādo taṃ mahāvāte vā opuṇāmi, nadiyā vā sīghasotāya pavāhemi." AN. 2:199.

6. *Dial*. 2:211.

meanings are relevant to the second *jhāna*. On the one hand the meditator gains stronger confidence in the Triple Gem as the truth begins to dawn upon him through his practice; on the other, because of this confidence, he gains serenity or tranquility. Hence the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* points out: "Faith is said to be tranquility. Through connection with it, the *jhāna* is also said to be tranquilizing, as a cloth when steeped in indigo is called indigo."[1] The close relation between faith and mental clarity is demonstrated by the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā*'s explanation of the faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*):

> It [faith] has purifying, or aspiring as its characteristic. As the water-purifying gem of the universal monarch thrown into water causes solids, alluvia, waterweeds and mud to subside and makes the water clear, transparent and undisturbed, so faith arising discards the hindrances, causes the corruptions to subside, purifies the mind and makes it undisturbed.[2]

These two characteristics of trust and tranquility come to prominence with the elimination of *vitakka* and *vicāra* in the second *jhāna*.

The third stage of faith is the confidence arisen with the achievement of stream entry. This faith is qualified as "confidence born of understanding" (*aveccappasāda*) or "rational faith" (*ākāravatī saddhā*) because it develops through direct insight into the Four Noble Truths: "He sees the Noble Truths with understanding."[3] (Wr. tr.). The Buddha explains the third degree of faith as follows:

> Monks, in anyone in whom faith in the Tathāgata is established, rooted, supported by these methods, by these sentences, by these words, that faith is called reasoned, based on vision strong; it is indestructible by a recluse or a brahman, or devas or Māras or Brahmā or anyone in the world.[4]

Unification of Mind (*cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ*)

To explicate the meaning of the phrase "unification of mind" (*cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ*), the Vibhaṅga merely offers the standard Abhidhamma definition of one-pointedness as found in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi:

---

1. *Expositor*, 1:255. "Sampasādanaṃ vuccati saddhā. Sampasādanayogato jhānampi sampasādanaṃ. Nīlavaṇṇayogato nīlavatthaṃ viya." Dhs.A., p. 213.

2. *Expositor*, 1:157. "Sā panesā sampasādanalakkhaṇā ca saddhā, sampakkhandana lakkhaṇā ca. Yathā hi rañño cakkavattissa udakapasādako maṇi udake pakkhitto paṅkasevālapanakakaddamaṃ sannisidāpeti; udakaṃ acchaṃ karoti vippasannaṃ anāvilaṃ evameva saddhā uppajjamānā nīvaraṇe vikkhambheti kilese sannisīdāpeti cittaṃ pasādeti anāvilaṃ karoti." Dhs.A., p. 162.

3. "Yo ariya saccāni avecca passati." Dines Anderson and Helmer Smith, eds., *Sutta-Nipatta*, New ed. (Pali Text Society [Publication Series] Vol. 72. 1913; reprint, London: Luzac & Co., 1965), v. 229.

4. MLS. 1:382. "Yassakassaci bhikkhave imehi ākārehi imehi padehi imehi byañjanehi Tathāgate saddhā niviṭṭhā hoti mūlajātā patiṭṭhitā, ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave ākāravati saddhā dassana mūlikā, daḷhā, asaṃhāriyā samaṇena vā, brāhmaṇena vā, devena vā, mārena vā Brahmuṇā vā kenaci vā lokasmiṃ." MN. 1:320.

> The stability, solidity, absorbed steadfastness of thought which on that occasion is the absence of distraction, balance, imperturbed mental procedure, quiet, the faculty and the power of concentration, right concentration.[1]

This makes unification of mind synonymous with one-pointedness and concentration. Though one-pointedness is present already as a factor of the first *jhāna*, it only gains special mention in the formula for the second *jhāna* since it is in this *jhāna* that concentration first acquires eminence. The concentration of the first *jhāna*, being subject to the disturbing influence of applied thought and sustained thought, is still imperfect. In the second *jhāna*, however, where these gross factors have been suppressed and the mind is purified by inner confidence, one-pointedness becomes stronger and more stable. The *Visuddhimagga* explains the eminence of this mental unification in its etymological account of the term:

> Here is the construction or the meaning in that case. Unique (*eka*) it comes up (*udeti*), thus it is single (*ekodi*); the meaning is, it comes up as the superlative, the best, because it is not overtopped by applied and sustained thought, for the best is called 'unique' in the world. Or it is permissible to say that when deprived of applied and sustained thought it is unique, without companion. Or alternatively: it evokes (*udayati*) associated states, thus it is an evoker (*udi*); the meaning is, it arouses. And that is unique (*eka*) in the sense of best, and it is an evoker (*udi*), thus it is a unique evoker (*ekodi*=single). This is a term for concentration.[2]

***Concentration* (*samādhi*)**

This *jhāna*, or the rapture and happiness of this *jhāna*, are said to be "born of concentration" (*samādhijaṃ*). The concentration that gives birth to this *jhāna* can be understood in two ways – either as the earlier stages of concentration leading up to the second *jhāna* or as the concentration immediately associated with the second *jhāna* itself.[3] To reach the second *jhāna* the meditator had to pass through three earlier degrees of concentration – the preliminary concentration of his initial endeavor, access concentration, and the absorption concentration of the first *jhāna*. All three of these stages can be seen as the concentration giving birth to the second *jhāna*. Alternatively, the concentration giving birth to the *jhāna* can be identified with the one-pointedness contained in the second *jhāna* itself. As in the case of the phrase "unification of mind," special emphasis is placed on this concentration to show its secure establishment following upon the cessation of applied and sustained thought. *Vitakka* and *vicāra* hinder advanced concentration because they activate discursive thinking, which disrupts one-pointedness. The *Visuddhimagga* points out, in regard to the concentration of the

---

1. See Ch. IV, p. 144.

2. PP., pp. 162-63. "Tatrāyaṃ atthayojanā. Eko udetī ti ekodi; vitakkavicārehi anajjhārūḷhattā aggo seṭṭho hutvā udetī ti attho. Seṭṭho pi hi loke eko ti vuccati. Vitakkavicāravirahito vā eko asahāyo hutvā iti pi vuttaṃ vaṭṭati. Atha vā, sampayuttadhamme udayatī ti udi; uṭṭhapeti ti attho. Seṭṭhaṭṭhena eko ca so udi cā ti ekodi; samādhiss'etaṃ adhivacanaṃ." Vism., p. 126.

3. *Ibid*., p. 105.

second *jhāna*, that "it is only this concentration that is quite worthy to be called 'concentration' because of its complete confidence and extreme immobility due to absence of disturbance by applied and sustained thought."[1]

***Rapture and Happiness* (pītisukhaṃ)**

Rapture and happiness in the first *jhāna*, as we saw, are described as born of seclusion (*vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ*). In contrast, the rapture and happiness of the second *jhāna* are said to be born of concentration (*samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ*). The pre-*jhānic* condition for the arising of rapture and happiness in the first *jhāna* is seclusion, which means the suppression of the five hindrances in access concentration. The preliminary condition for the arising of rapture and happiness in the second *jhāna* is the concentration of the first *jhāna*. Thus when rapture and happiness are said to be "born of concentration," this can be taken to indicate that their source is the first *jhāna* concentration. However, the phrase can also be understood to mean that they are born from the concomitant concentration of the second *jhāna*, as the *Visuddhimagga* allows.

Because they are not weakened by the gross factors of applied and sustained thought, the rapture and happiness of the second *jhāna* are more peaceful and profound than those of the first. In the Dīgha-Nikāya the Buddha explains how the rapture and happiness experienced by the meditator in the second *jhāna* pervade his being so thoroughly that there is no single part of his body that is not affected by them:

> And his very body does he so pervade, drench, permeate, and suffuse with rapture and happiness born of concentration, that there is not a spot in his whole frame not suffused therewith. Just, O king, as if there were a deep pool with water welling up into it from a spring beneath, and with no inlet from the east or west, from the north or south, and it does not rain from time to time, still the current of cool waters rising up from that spring would pervade, fill, permeate, and suffuse the pool with cool waters, and there would be no part or portion of the pool unsuffused therewith.[2]

General Remarks on the Second Jhāna

As the first *jhāna* has five factors, the second *jhāna* has three – rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). The two factors present in the first *jhāna* but absent in the second are the two gross elements which have been made to subside –

---

1. PP., p. 164. "Atha kho ayaṃ eva samādhi samādhīti vattabbatam arahati, vitakkavicārakkhobhavirahena ativiya acalattā suppasannattā ca." Vism., p. 127.

2. *Dial*. 1:85. "So imaṃ eva kāyaṃ samādhijena pītisukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati nāssa kiñci sabbāvati kāyassa samādhijena pīti-sukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti. Seyyāthapi mahārāja udakarahado ubbhidodako tassa n'eva assa puratthimāya disāya udakassa āyamukhaṃ na pacchimāya disāya udakassa āyamukhaṃ, na uttarāya disāya udakassa āyamukhaṃ na dakkhiṇāya disāya udakassa āyamukhaṃ devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya. Atha kho tamhā udakarahadā sitā vāri dhāra ubbhijjitvā taṃ-eva udakarahadaṃ sītena vārinā abhisandeyya parisandeyya paripūreyya paripphareyya nāssa kiñci sabbāvato udaka rahadassa sītena vārinā apphuṭaṃ assa. Evaṃ eva kho mahārāja bhikkhu imaṃ eva kāyaṃ samādhijena pītisukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa samādhijena pītisukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti." DN. 1:74-75.

applied thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*). Unlike the first *jhāna* formula, which does not mention one-pointedness explicitly, the formula for the second *jhāna* refers to it twice – one time directly under the synonymous term "unification of mind" (*ekodibhāvaṃ*), and once obliquely by calling the rapture and happiness "born of concentration" (*samādhijaṃ*). Even though the three factors of the second *jhāna* are the same in nature as those in the first, they are still different in quality. The factors that remain after the gross elements have been eliminated are of a subtler, more peaceful, and more exquisite qualitative tone.

Whereas all the states mentioned in the first *jhāna* formula are *jhāna* factors, the present formula includes "internal confidence". This indicates that the constituency of the *jhāna* is wider than its basic factors. The Anupada Sutta, already referred to, gives the following expanded list of states pertaining to the second *jhāna*: "inward tranquility and rapture and joy and one-pointedness of mind, impingement, feeling, perception, will, thought, desire, determination, energy, mindfulness, equanimity and attention."[1] The Dhammasaṅgaṇi gives a list of close to sixty states, including all those present in the first *jhāna* except *vitakka* and *vicāra* and their equivalents.[2] The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, too, gives thirty-three possible constituents of the second *jhāna*. This list is identical with that of the first *jhāna* except that *vitakka* and *vicāra* are here omitted.[3]

The Third Jhāna

The Attainment of the Third Jhāna

To attain the third *jhāna* the meditator must apply the same method he used to ascend from the first to the second. He must first master the second *jhāna* in the five ways already described. Then he must enter it, emerge from it and reflect upon its defects. When he does so he sees that this attainment is threatened by the two flaws, the defect of proximate corruption and the inherent defect. The defect of proximate corruption is the nearness of applied and sustained thought. If these should arise they will disrupt the serenity and powerful concentration of the second *jhāna* and bring the mind back down to the first *jhāna* or to lower states of consciousness. The inherent defect is the presence of rapture (*pīti*), a relatively gross factor which weakens the other *jhāna* factors remaining in the mind. As the Buddha says: "Whatever there is in it pertaining to rapture, of mental excitation, that appears to be gross."[4] (Wr. tr.)

Since the meditator finds that the second *jhāna* is insecure and corrupted by rapture, he cultivates an attitude of indifference towards it. With mindfulness and awareness he contemplates the defectiveness of rapture, and intensifies his attention to happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), considering them as more peaceful and sub-

1. MLS. 3:78 MN. 3:26.

2. Dhs., p. 44.

3. Nārada, *Manual*, pp. 131-32. See above Ch. IV., p. 154.

4. "Yad eva tattha pītigataṃ cetaso ubbillāvitattaṃ etena etaṃ olārikaṃ akkhāyati." DN. 1:37.

lime. Putting away attachment to the second *jhāna*, he focusses his mind on gaining the third *jhāna*, which appears superior for the reason that it possesses happiness and mental unification free from the disturbing influence of rapture. He again renews concentration on his meditation object with the aim of abandoning rapture and ascending to the higher *jhāna*. When his practice matures, he attains the third *jhāna* with its factors of happiness and one-pointedness. In the attainment the mind passes through the same stages of the thought-process as in the earlier *jhānas*. But here *vitakka*, *vicāra*, and *pīti* are present in the moments of access, only disappearing on the actual occasion of full absorption.

The standard formula for the third *jhāna* appears in the suttas as follows:

> With the fading away of rapture, he dwells in equanimity, mindful and discerning and he experiences in his own person that happiness of which the noble ones say: 'Happily lives he who is equanimous and mindful – thus he enters and dwells in the third *jhāna*.[1] (Wr. tr.).

We have seen that of the five *jhāna* factors pertaining to the first *jhāna*, two are eliminated with the attainment of the second *jhāna*. The third *jhāna* carries this progressive refinement of consciousness a step further, eliminating rapture. It retains happiness and one-pointedness, which are now purer and more powerful because free from admixture with the gross rapture.

The formula indicates that the third *jhāna* contains, besides the *jhāna* factors, three additional *cetasika*s or mental concomitants which are not included among the *jhāna* factors. These three are equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*sati*), and clear comprehension or discernment (*sampajañña*). Therefore a peculiarity of this formula is that it mentions three mental properties which are not *jhāna* factors and does not mention one-pointedness, which along with happiness is a constituting factor of the third *jhāna*.

We will now take the three additional mental concomitants and the two *jhāna* factors mentioned in the formula and discuss them one by one.

Equanimity (upekkhā)

The Pāli word *upekkhā* (Skt. *upekṣā*) is formed from the prefix *upa* and the root *ikh* (Skt. *ikṣ*) meaning "to see". The *Vimativinodanī*, the subcommentary to the Vinaya, giving *upa* the sense of impartiality, justly, or unprejudicedly, explains *upekkhā*: "the state of impartiality due to the habit of associating with wisdom. Thus it sees justly."[2] (Wr. tr.) *Upekkhā* therefore means, etymologically, even-mindedness or just-mindedness. The commentary to the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* defines equanimity as "looking on impartially" and explains it as having the characteristic of reflection or of balance, the function of

---

1. "Pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno, sukhaṃ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedi yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti 'upekkhako satimā sukhavihāri ti tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." DN. 2:313; 1:75.

2. "Paññāya sahacaraṇaparicayena yathā samavāhitabhāvo hoti. Evaṃ yuttito passati." Coliya Kassapa Thera, [*Samantapāsādikā Vinayaṭṭhakathā Ṭīkā*] *Vimativinodaniṭīkā*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, l960), 1.73 (hereafter cited as Vimv. T.).

avoiding excess and deficiency or of destroying bias, and the manifestation as neutrality.[1]

The *Visuddhimagga* and the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* explicate the clause “he dwells in equanimity” (*upekkhako viharati*) in identical terms:

> He dwells in equanimity: it watches [things] as they arise (*upapattito ikkhati*), thus it is equanimity (*upekkhā* – or onlooking); it sees fairly, sees without partiality (*a-pakkhapatita*), is the meaning. A possessor of the third *jhāna* is said to dwell in equanimity since he possesses equanimity that is clear, abundant and sound.[2]

These explanations are suitable for understanding the kind of *upekkhā* which is included in the third *jhāna*. However, the moral *upekkhā* or “equanimity” occurring in the Pāli texts has a wide range of meanings. The *Visuddhimagga* isolates ten, partly overlapping, kinds of equanimity found in the canon. These are as follows:

1. six-factored equanimity,
2. equanimity as a divine abiding,
3. equanimity as an enlightenment factor,
4. equanimity of energy,
5. equanimity about formations,
6. equanimity as a feeling,
7. equanimity about insight,
8. equanimity as specific neutrality,
9. equanimity of *jhāna*, and
10. equanimity of purification.[3]

For the sake of clear understanding it will be helpful to consider each briefly in turn.

1. Six-factored equanimity (*chaḷaṅgupekkhā*)

When an arahant comes in contact with objects through his senses he neither clings to them nor rejects them; rather, he regards them with an attitude of emotional equilibrium. This attitude is called six-factored equanimity, an unbiased response towards the six sense objects – forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and mental objects – experienced through the six sense faculties. As the Buddha says: “Here a bhikkhu whose cankers

1. “Ajjhupekkhanato upekkhā: sā paṭisaṅkhāna lakkhaṇā, samavāhita lakkhaṇā vā; ūnādhika nivārana rasā, pakkhapātupacchedana rasā vā; majjhattabhāva paccupaṭṭhānā.” Buddhaghosa, [*Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*] *Manorathapuranī Nāma Aṇguttaraṭṭhakathā*,[Pāli Text in Burmese script], 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1958-68), 1:390 (hereafter cited as AN.A.).

2. PP., p. 166. Vism., p. 129.

3. PP., p. 166. “Upekkhā pana dasavidhā hoti: chaḷaṅgupekkhā, brahmavihārupekkhā, bojjhaṅgupekkhā, viriyupekkhā, saṅkhārupekkhā, vedanupekkhā, vipassanupekkhā, tatramajjhattupekkhā, jhānupekkhā, pārisuddhi upekkhā ti.” Vism., p. 129.

are destroyed is neither glad nor sad on seeing a visible object with the eye; he dwells in equanimity, mindful, and fully aware."[1]

2. Equanimity as a divine abiding (*brahmavihāra upekkhā*)

Whereas six-factored equanimity is directed towards sense objects, equanimity as a divine abiding is directed towards living beings. This type of equanimity comes as the fourth of the four sublime "social emotions" which a meditator is advised to cultivate towards all beings. The other three are loving-kindness (*mettā*), the wish for the happiness of all beings; compassion (*karuṇā*), commiseration with the pain and suffering of other; and sympathetic joy (*muditā*), rejoicing at the success and good fortune of others. While loving kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy tend towards the side of approval in relation to beings, and their opposites – aversion, cruelty, and envy – towards the side of resentment, equanimity is marked by the transcending of both approval and resentment.

The Buddha declares that a bhikkhu practising the sublime state of equanimity dwells pervading all directions with a mind of equanimity.[2] The Vibhaṅga explains that "just as he would feel equanimity on seeing a person who was neither beloved nor unloved, so he pervades all beings with equanimity."[3] (Wr. tr.) The commentaries explain the divine abiding of equanimity thus:

> Equanimity is characterized as promoting the aspect of neutrality towards beings. Its function is to see equality in beings. It is manifested as the quieting of resentment and approval. Its proximate cause is seeing ownership of deeds (*kamma*) thus: 'Beings are owners of their deeds.'[4]

3. Equanimity as an enlightenment factor (*bojjhaṅg' upekkhā*)

Equanimity is also included among the seven factors of enlightenment as the enlightenment factor of equanimity (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*). It comes last in the series, being preceded by the enlightenment factors of mindfulness, investigation, energy, rapture, tranquility, and concentration. These seven factors are called invincible states (*aparihāniyā dhammā*) because their practice leads without fail to *nibbāna*.[5] The Buddha says:

> Just as, monks, in a peaked house all rafters whatsoever go together to the peak, slope to the peak, join in the peak, and of them all the peak is reckoned

---

1. PP., p. 166. "Idha khīṇāsavo bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā neva sumano hoti na dummano, upekkhako ca viharati sato sampajāno." AN. 3:279.

2. DN. 1:251.

3. Vibh., p. 275.

4. PP., p. 244. "Sattesu majjhattākārappavattilakkhaṇā upekkhā, sattesu samabhāvadassanarasā, paṭighānunayavūpasampaccupaṭṭhānā. kammassakā sattā." Vism., p. 264.

5. KS. 5:85-86.

> chief, even so, monks, one who cultivates and makes much of the seven limbs of wisdom, slopes to nibbana, inclines to nibbana, tends to nibbana.[1]

4. Specific neutrality (*tatramajjhattatā upekkhā*)

The fourth kind of equanimity is *tatramajjhattatā*, a Pāli term that has been rendered into English by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli as "specific neutrality." According to the commentaries specific neutrality consists in the "equal efficiency of conascent states" (*sahajātānaṃ samvāhitabhūtā*).[2] It is the mental factor responsible for maintaining balance among the constituent factors in a state of consciousness. The *Visuddhimagga* explains it thus:

> Specific neutrality (*tatramajjhattatā*-lit. 'neutrality in regard thereto') is neutrality (*majjhattatā*) in regard to those states [of consciousness and consciousness-concomitants] arisen in association with it. Its function is to prevent deficiency and excess, or its function is to inhibit partiality. It is manifested as neutrality. It should be regarded as like a conductor (driver) who looks with equanimity on thoroughbreds progressing evenly.[3]

The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* classifies *upekkhā* of this kind as a morally beautiful mental property (*sobhana cetasika*).[4] It is said to be present in every beautiful state of consciousness, giving balance and harmony to the virtuous mind. As a particular *cetasika*, *tatramajjhattatā* can assume different forms in different contexts. In fact, as we will see below, it appears as six of the ten kinds of equanimity being outlined here. Shwe Zan Aung, who translates the Pāli term as "balance of mind" or "mental equipoise," shows this multivalent character of the state:

> It is intellectual and not hedonic, and appears as a nuance in conscious experience, when the object is of a 'higher' kind than those which evoke the hedonic *upekkhā*. It is, e.g., a *bojjhanga*, or a factor of wisdom, in the consciousness of Ariyans, and a factor of higher knowledge than the average, in the consciousness of average minds (*Three Ṭīkā*'s, p. 195). It is this tatramajjhattatā which we meet with in the phrases "Brahmacariyupekkha" or religious equanimity, and saṅkhārupekkhā, or indifference to the world.[5]

---

1. *Ibid.* 5:63. "Seyyathāpi bhikkhave kūṭāgārassa yā kāci gopānā siyo sabbā tā kūṭaninnā, kūṭaponā, kūtapabbhārā, evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave bhikkhu sattabojjhange bhāvento sattabojjhange bahulīkaronto nibbānaninno hoti nibbānapono nibbānapabbhāro." SN. 5:75.

2. PP., p. 167, 527. Vism., pp. 130, 395

3. PP., p. 527. "Tesu dhammesu majjhattatā tatramajjhattatā, sā cittacetasikānaṃ samavāhitalakkhaṇā, ūnādhikatānivāranarasā, pakkhapāta upacchedanarasā vā, majjhattabhāvapaccupaṭṭhānā; cittacetasikānaṃ ajjhupekkhanabhāvena samappavattānaṃ ājāniyānaṃ ajjhupekkhakasārathi viya daṭṭhabba." Vism., p. 895. Dhs.A., p. 177.

4. Nārada. *Manual*, p. 78

5. *Compendium*, p. 230.

5. Equanimity of *jhāna* (*jhāna upekkhā*)

Equanimity of *jhāna* is, as the name implies, the equanimity present in the experience of the *jhānas*. It is this type of equanimity, a mode of specific neutrality, which is signified by the phrase describing the third *jhāna* meditator as abiding in equanimity, as we see below (pp. 193-94).

6. Purification equanimity (*parisuddhi upekkhā*)

"Purification equanimity" is the equanimity present in the fourth *jhāna*, which gains this designation because it purifies all opposition. We will discuss this type of equanimity more fully in the section on the fourth *jhāna*.

7. Equanimity of energy (*viriya upekkhā*)

The balanced application of energy by the avoidance of over-exertion and laxity is called "equanimity of energy". Striving too hard with the expectation of quick results tends to agitation and frustation; at such times the meditator must call this equanimity to mind and tone down his exertions. On the other hand, laxity and overconfidence cause a meditator to drift away from the path; at such times he should apply energy to bring himself back to the path. In this way he avoids the two extremes of excessive application and laxity.

8. Equanimity about formations (*sankhāra upekkhā*)

"Equanimity about formations" is a technical term used in the context of meditation, relevant to both serenity-meditation and insight-meditation. It signifies the wisdom which looks with detached indifference towards the various phenomena that come within its view. In the case of serenity-meditation there are eight types of such equanimity. These consist in detached indifference towards the eight sets of factors to be surmounted by each of the eight meditative attainments, i.e., the four *jhānas* and the four immaterial states. In the case of insight-meditation there are ten types of equanimity about formations. These amount to the mental composure towards formations which evolves for the purpose of obtaining the four paths, their fruits, the liberation of emptiness, and the liberation of signlessness.[1] We will discuss this kind of equanimity at greater length in connection with the attainment of supramundane *jhāna*.

9. Equanimity about insight (*vipassanā upekkhā*)

Equanimity about insight is in effect identical with the equanimity about formations that emerges in the development of insight meditation. Buddhaghosa explains the slight nuance of difference between them as following upon the difference between neutrality about investigating formations and neutrality about catching hold of them.

> …When a man has begun insight, and he sees with insight knowledge the three characteristics, then there is neutrality in him about further investigating the impermanence etc. of formations, and that neutrality is called equanimity about insight. But… when a man, through seeking the three characteristics,

1. Pts., pp. 60-65.

> sees the three kinds of becoming as if burning, then there is neutrality in him about catching hold of formation: and that neutrality is called equanimity about formations.[1]

10. Equanimity as a feeling (*vedanā upekkhā*)

Equanimity as a feeling is a hedonic kind of *upekkhā* consisting in neutral feeling, i.e., feeling which is neither painful nor pleasant. Experientially feeling is either pleasant (*sukha*), painful (*dukkha*), or neither-painful-nor-pleasant (*adukkhamasukha*). It is this last kind of feeling that is intended by "equanimity as a feeling." The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* says in definition of hedonic neutrality:

> 'Hedonic indifference' means neutral feeling. It may be verbally defined as that which views equally the occurence of the aspects of pain and pleasure, and may be further amplified thus: 'proceeds under a medium condition by occupying a neutral position'.[2]

Although this experience comes in between pain and pleasure it is not a mode of *tatramajjhattatā*, "specific neutrality". The latter belongs to the aggregate of mental formations (*sankhārakkhandha*) and is a more evolved mental stance involving reflective impartiality towards sense objects, beings, or formed phenomena. Equanimous feeling is pure hedonic neutrality, and belongs to the aggregate of feelings (*vedanākkhandha*). Whereas *tatramajjhattatā* is a morally beautiful mental factor (*sobhanacetasika*) which can be present only in wholesome or indeterminate states of consciousness, equanimous feeling is a variable which can be present in any kind of consciousness – wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate.

These ten kinds of equanimity explained in the *Visuddhimagga* can be reduced to four basic factors. Equanimity about formations and equanimity about insight belong to wisdom (*paññā*), the wisdom that looks upon phenomena with detached indifference. Equanimity of energy and equanimity of feeling are, respectively, the mental factors of energy (*viriya*) and feeling (*vedanā*). The remaining six are modes of *tatramajjhattatā*, specific neutrality. The *Vimativinodanī* points out how the same factor of neutrality has been given different names under different circumstances:

> There the same centredness (of mind) is called six-factored equanimity of a *khīṇāsava* (one whose cankers are destroyed) as it does not abandon the natural state of purity when desirable or undesirable objects of the six kinds come into focus in the six doors; equanimity as a divine abiding, as it maintains the balanced state of mind towards all beings; equanimity as an enlightenment factor, as it balances the associated mental states; specific equanimity of *jhāna*, as it unbiasedly balances the great happiness in the third

---

1. PP., p. 168. "…Yā āraddhavipassakassa vipassanāñāṇena lakkhaṇattaye diṭṭhe sankhārānaṃ aniccabhāvādivicinane majjhattatā uppajjati, ayaṃ vipassanupekkhā nāma… Yā lakkhaṇattayassa diṭṭhattā āditte viya tayo bhave passato sankhāragahaṇe majjhattatā, ayaṃ sankhārupekkhā nāma." Vism., p. 131.

2. *Expositor*, 1:56. "Upekkhāti cettha adukkhamasukhā vedanā vuttā. Sā hi sukhadukkhākārappavattiṃ upekkhāti, majjhattākārasaṇṭhitattā tenākārena pavattatīti upekkhā." Dhs.A., p. 85.

> *jhāna*; and purification equanimity, as it purifies all mental factors in the fourth *jhāna*. Thus it is said to be six-fold owing to circumstantial differences.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The kind of *upekkhā* referred to in the third *jhāna* formula by the phrase "he abides in equanimity" is the equanimity of *jhāna*, a form of *tatramajjhattatā*.[2] Since the latter is present in all wholesome states of consciousness, it follows that *jhānic* equanimity has been present in the meditator's mind even while he was dwelling in access concentration and in the two lower *jhānas*. It is only mentioned first in the third *jhāna* formula for the reason that it first comes to prominence here, the fading away of rapture allowing it to become evident.

Nevertheless, though *upekkhā* is referred to twice in the formula, it is not cited as a *jhāna* factor for the third *jhāna*. Only two mental states are designated as third *jhāna* factors, namely, happiness and one-pointedness. Thus in the Vibhaṅga's treatment of the third *jhāna*, though *upekkhā* is included among the prominent constituents of the *jhāna*,[3] the *jhāna* itself is said to be a two-factored state comprising happiness and one-pointedness.[4] The reason is that only those phenomena present in a meditative attainment which oppose the hindrances and aid mental unification are counted as *jhāna* factors. These are the five mentioned in the Mahāvedalla Sutta, plus neither painful-nor-pleasant feeling, a factor of the fourth *jhāna*.

Some confusion might arise over the statement that both happiness and equanimity are present in the third *jhāna*. One might think that two different feelings are present simultaneously. Such confusion is due to misinterpreting this equanimity as equanimous feeling or hedonic neutrality (*vedan'upekkhā*). Since only one feeling can be present in a single state of consciousness happiness, which is pleasant feeling, cannot co-exist with equanimous feeling. But when the *upekkhā* referred to here is understood as the intellectual, morally wholesome quality of *jhānic* equanimity or specific neutrality – which can enter into association with either pleasant or indifferent feeling – then there is no difficulty in admitting the simultaneous presence of equanimity and happiness.

Mindfulness and Discernment

Mindfulness (*sati*) and discernment (*sampajañña*) are two mental states which work hand in hand in the practice of meditation. They are frequently joined together in a compound. Together they facilitate progress in the spheres both of serenity and insight.

Sati, or mindfulness, means the remembrance of an object. It sometimes signifies simply memory, but in the context of meditation it means the constant bearing of the meditation subject in the mind. Mindfulness is a very clear and steady state; thus it is said to have

---

1. Vimv.T. 1:73-74.

2. PP., p. 168. Vism., P. 131.

3. "*Jhāna* means equanimity, mindfulness, discernment, happiness [and] one-pointedness of mind." (Wr. tr.). "Jhānanti upekkhā sati sampajaññaṃ sukhaṃ cittassekaggatā." Vibh., p. 270.

4. "*Jhāna* is two-factored: happiness [and] one-pointedness of mind." (Wr. tr.). "Duvaṇgikaṃ jhānaṃ hoti: sukhaṃ, cittass'ekaggatā." *Ibid*., p. 275.

the characteristic of "not floating away" (*apilāpanatā*).[1] The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* compares mindfulness to the king's treasurer who reminds the king of everything he has in his treasury; mindfulness reminds the meditator of both his good and bad qualities, and also reminds him to avoid the bad and cultivate the good.[2] Mindfulness figures as a controlling faculty (*indriya*), a power (*bala*), an enlightenment factor (*bojjhaṅga*), and a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path (*maggaṅga*).

Sampajañña can be translated as discernment, awareness, or clear comprehension. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* explains it thus:

> 'Comprehension' is that which comprehends. The meaning is to know a thing all round, in different ways. Knowledge of a thing according to its usefulness, its expediency, its scope, and to know it without confusion: these are its four divisions.[3]

Discernment is in nature the same as wisdom (*paññā*), which has illuminating and understanding as characteristics.[4] In insight meditation, discernment is "that which knows impermanence, etc., in right ways."[5] Again the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* states that "comprehension has the characteristic of opposition to delusion, the function of overcoming doubt, or of bringing a work to completion, and the manifestation of examination."[5]

Mindfulness and discernment are most conspicuous in insight meditation, but they contribute as well to the attainment of *jhāna*. They are mentioned for the first time in the formula for the third *jhāna*, though this should not be taken to imply that they appear for the first time only here. So fundamental are these two factors to meditative development that a meditator cannot attain even the access to the first *jhāna* without them, let alone absorption. In fact we see the two already enjoined upon a meditator in his preliminary training before he actually undertakes intensive practice:

> He is mindful and acts with clear comprehension when going and coming; when looking forward and backward; when bending and stretching his body; when wearing his robes and alms-bowl, when eating, drinking, chewing and tasting; when discharging excrement and urine; when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep and awakening; when speaking and keeping silent.[6]

---

1. *Expositor*, 1:190. Dhs.A., p. 188.

2. *Expositor*, 1:159-6l. Dhs.A., pp. 164-65.

3. *Expositor*, 1:173. "Sampajānāti ti sampajaññaṃ. Samantato pakārehi jānātī'ti attho. Sātthaka sampajaññaṃ sappāya sampajaññaṃ gocara sampajaññaṃ asammoha sampajaññaṃ ti. Imesaṃ cattunnaṃ panassavasena bhedo veditabbo." Dhs.A., p. 175.

4. *Expositor*, 1:161. "Obhāsana lakkhaṇā paññā, pajānana lakkhaṇā ca." Dhs.A., p. 165.

5. Expositor, 1:173. Dhs.A., p. 175.

5. *Expositor*, 1:161. "Asammohalakkhaṇaṃ sampajaññaṃ. Tīraṇarasaṃ; pavicaya paccupaṭṭhānaṃ." Dhs.A., p. 219.

6. Nyānatiloka, *The Word of the Buddha*, p. 85. MN. 1:274.

Because they are comparatively gross, the first and second *jhānas* do not reveal the functions of mindfulness and discernment with sufficient clarity to merit attention. But when the level of absorption reaches the subtlety of the third *jhāna* the two become distinctly evident.[1] Keen mindfulness and discernment are particularly needed to avoid a return of rapture. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* points out that just as a suckling calf, removed from the cow and left unguarded, again approaches the cow, so the happiness of the third *jhāna* tends to veer towards rapture if unguarded by mindfulness and discernment.[2] Once rapture arises the third *jhāna* is lost. It is mindfulness and discernment which hold the *jhānic* mind on happiness rather than rapture, to which the mind naturally tends to cling in their absence. Therefore, in order to emphasize these functions of mindfulness and discernment, they are mentioned here rather than in the descriptions of the preceding *jhānas*.

Happiness

After the meditator has eliminated applied and sustained thought in attaining the second *jhāna* and rapture in attaining the third, what remains from the original set of five factors is happiness and one-pointedness. The feeling experienced by the meditator in the third *jhāna* is not equanimity but happiness (*sukha*), as made explicit in the phrase: "He experiences happiness with his body" (*sukhaṃ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti*). In the Sāmaññaphala Sutta the Buddha illustrates this with the following simile:

> And his very body does he so pervade, drench, permeate, and suffuse with that ease [happiness] that has no joy [rapture] with it, that there is no spot in his whole frame not suffused therewith.
>
> Just, O king, as when in a lotus tank the several lotus flowers, red or white or blue, born in the water, grown up in the water, not rising up above the surface of the water, drawing up nourishment from the depths of the water, are so pervaded, drenched, permeated, and suffused from their very tips down to their roots with the cool moisture thereof, that there is no spot in the whole plant, whether of the red lotus, or of the white, or of the blue, not suffused therewith. Similarly, O king, the bhikkhu so pervades, drenches, permeates, and suffuses his body with raptureless happiness, that there is no spot in the whole body not suffused therewith.[3]

---

1. Vism., p. 13l.

2. *Expositor*, 1:233.

3. *Dial*. 1:85-86. "So imaṃ eva kāyaṃ nippītikena sukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa nippītikena sukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti.

Seyyathā pi mahā-rāja uppaliniyaṃ, paduminiyaṃ puṇḍarīkiniyaṃ appekaccāni uppalāni vā padumāni vā puṇḍarikāni vā udake-jātāni udakesaṃvaḍḍhāni udakā'nuggatāni anto-nimugga-positāni, tāni yāva caggā yāva ca mūlā sītena vārinā abhisannāni parisannāni paripūrāni paripphuṭṭhāni, nāssa kiñci sabbāvataṃ uppalānaṃ vā padumānaṃ vā puṇḍarikānaṃ vā sītena varinā apphuṭaṃ assa. Evaṃ eva kho mahārāja bhikkhu imaṃ eva kāyam nippītikena sukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa nippītikena sukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti." DN. 1:75.

The word "body" (*kāya*) could be misinterpreted if we are not careful about its usage in this particular context, leading us to the wrong conclusion that the happiness belonging to the *jhāna* is pleasant bodily feeling. The happiness is still mental pleasure (*cetasika sukha*) or joy (*somanassa*), as in the first two *jhānas*. The word "body" here means the mental body (*nāmakāya*), that is, the group of mental factors associated with consciousness. However, the happiness of the mental body also overflows and produces physical pleasure. For the meditator's mind, saturated with happiness, originates certain types of subtle material phenomena which cause bodily pleasure even after the meditator has emerged from *jhāna*. In explanation of this the *Visuddhimagga* says:

> Now as to the clause 'he feels bliss [happiness] with his body', here although in one actually possessed of the third *jhāna* there is no concern about feeling bliss [happiness], nevertheless he would feel the bliss [happiness] associated with his mental body, and after emerging from the *jhāna* he would also feel bliss (happiness] since his material body would have been affected by the exceedingly superior matter originated by that bliss [happiness] associated with the mental body. It is in order to point to this meaning that the words, 'he feels bliss [happiness] with his body' are said.[1]

One-pointedness

The second constituting factor of the third *jhāna* is one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*). Though one-pointedness is not mentioned by name in the third *jhāna* formula, its presence in the attainment can be implicitly understood. We noticed earlier that the formula for the first *jhāna* also does not refer directly to one-pointedness though it is more than obvious that it must be included there. Since one-pointedness is a factor common to all states of consciousness, indispensable to sustained concentration, it must also be present with abundant strength in the third *jhāna*. It is explicitly mentioned in fact as a *jhāna* factor in the Vibhaṅga.[2] Moreover, the mind in the third *jhāna* is full of *sukha*, and the mind suffused with *sukha*, as we saw earlier, gains *samādhi*, identical in meaning with one-pointedness. Therefore one-pointedness must be present here. It is mentioned only in the second *jhāna* formula for the reason that it there acquires novel intensity due to the subsiding of applied and sustained thought.

In terms of the Abhidhamma analysis, the third *jhāna* consciousness includes all the factors originally present in the first *jhāna* consciousness except *vitakka*, *vicāra*, and *pīti*, three general variables. Thus it contains a minimum of thirty concomitants of consciousness, and can further include compassion and sympathetic joy separately at times when these qualities are developed to the *jhānic* level.[3]

---

1. PP., p. 169. "Idāni, 'sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti'ti ettha kiñcapi tatiyajjhānasamaṅgino sukhapaṭisaṃvedanābhogo n'atthi, evaṃ sante pi, yasmā tassa nāmakāyena sampayuttaṃ sukhaṃ, yaṃ vā taṃ nāmakāyasampayuttaṃ sukhaṃ, taṃsamuṭṭhānen'assa yasmā atipaṇītena rūpena rūpakāyo phuṭo, yassa phuṭattā jhāna vuṭṭhito pi sukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedeyya, tasmā etaṃ atthaṃ dassento, sukhaṃ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti ti āha." Vism., p. 132.

2. Vibh., p. 275.

3. Narada, *Manual*, pp. 131-32.

After attaining the third *jhāna*, the yogin proceeds to perfect it through the five types of mastery, and then prepares himself for the next step.

The Fourth Jhāna

The Attainment of the Jhāna

Having achieved the fivefold mastery over the third *jhāna*, the meditator enters it, emerges from it, and reviews its constituting factors. When he reviews the factors the meditator sees that the attainment is threatened by the nearness of rapture (*pīti*); this is the fault of proximate corruption. The inherent defect is the presence of happiness (*sukha*), which he sees to be a relatively gross factor that weakens the entire attainment. As he reflects equanimous feeling and one-pointedness appear more subtle, peaceful, and secure, and thus more desirable.

Because of their proximity, happiness in the third *jhāna* is threatened by the possibility of a re-arising of rapture. Rapture was suppressed with the attainment of the third *jhāna*, but threatens to swell up again due to its natural association with happiness. Therefore if the meditator is not mindful his meditation can fall back to a lower level conjoined with rapture. The attainment of the fourth *jhāna* appears valuable as a protection from such a fall. It is also desired because of its more profound peacefulness and subtlety, stemming from its factors of equanimous feeling and one-pointedness of mind.

Then, taking as his object the same counterpart sign he took for the earlier attainments, the meditator repeats his concentration with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor of happiness and attaining the higher *jhāna*. When his practice matures the mind enters upon the thought-process culminating in absorption of the fourth *jhāna*. First the stream of consciousness (*bhavaṅga*) vibrates and gets cut off, after which there arises the mind-door adverting with the counterpart sign as object. This is followed by four or five impulsions (*javana*) on the same object, the last of which is an impulsion of the fourth *jhāna*. The three or four impulsions of the preliminary stage (*parikamma*) retain *vitakka* and *vicāra*, but because the *jhāna* to follow involves neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the preliminary impulsions, too, involve the same feeling. Thus they are devoid of rapture and happiness, as these are incompatible with neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.[1]

The Four Conditions

The standard suttanta description of the fourth *jhāna* is as follows:

> With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters and dwells in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.[2] (Wr. tr.).

---

1. PP., pp. 170-71.

2. “Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsatipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.” DN. 1:75.

The first part of this formula, explaining the preliminaries to the attainment of the *jhāna*, is said in the Mahāvedalla Sutta to express the four conditions needed for the fourth *jhāna*:

> There are four conditions, friend, for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant mind-deliverance. Here, friend, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the fourth *jhāna*… These are the four conditions for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant mind-deliverance.[1]

The four conditions referred to by the sutta are

1. the abandoning of pleasure;
2. the abandoning of pain;
3. the disappearance of joy; and
4. the disappearance of grief.

Before we can discuss these four conditions it is first necessary to determine the precise meaning of their terms.

1. Pleasure (*sukha*)

In our analysis of the word *sukha* in our discussion of the first *jhāna*, we noted that *sukha* has both a general and a narrow application. In a general sense *sukha* signifies happiness or pleasant feeling, covering both bodily pleasant feeling (*kāyika sukha*) and mental pleasant feeling (*cetasika sukha*). In a narrow sense *sukha* is used to signify exclusively bodily pleasant feeling; it is then contrasted with mental pleasant feeling, which is denoted by another word, *somanassa*, here translated "joy."[2]

Now the *sukha* spoken of as a factor of the first three *jhānas* is mental pleasant feeling, that is *somanassa* or joy. As we saw, the Vibhaṅga defines the *sukha* of the first *jhāna* as "mental pleasure, mental happiness, the felt pleasure and happiness born of mind-contact, pleasurable and happy feeling born of mind-contact."[3] (Wr. tr.). The same holds true of the *sukha* mentioned in the formulas for the second and third *jhāna*. But in the fourth *jhāna* description, the *sukha* which is said to be abandoned as a pre-requisite for entering the *jhāna* undergoes a shift in meaning: it now signifies bodily pleasure or physical happiness (*kāyikasukha*). Thus the Vibhaṅga defines the *sukha* intended in the phrase *sukhassa ca pahānā*, "with the abandoning of pleasure," as follows:

---

1. PP., p. 174. "Cattāro kho āvuso paccayā adukkhamasukhāya cetovimuttiyā samāpattiyā. Idh'āvuso bhikkhu sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsatipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. Ime kho āvuso cattāro paccayā adukkhamasukhāya cetovimuttiyā samāpattiyā'ti." MN. 1:296.

2. See Chapter IV, p. 140.

3. "Cetasikaṃ sātaṃ cetasikaṃ sukhaṃ cetosamphassajaṃ sātaṃ sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ cetosamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā." Vibh., p. 267.

> Therein, what is happiness [pleasure]? Bodily pleasure; bodily happiness, the felt pleasure and happiness born of body-contact, pleasurable and happy feeling born of body-contact – this is called ‘happiness’ [pleasure].[1] (Wr. tr.).

Mental pleasure, or happiness, will be indicated later in the formula by the word *somanassa*.

2. Pain (*dukkha*)

We see from the formula that the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* presupposes the prior abandonment of *dukkha* or pain. Like the word *sukha* the word *dukkha* has, besides its broader philosophical meaning dealt with in the Four Noble Truths, a twofold meaning in relation to feelings: on the one side it signifies all unpleasurable feeling, physical and mental; on the other it signifies exclusively bodily pain. When it is used to signify bodily pain it is contrasted with *domanassa*, “grief”, which then means mental unpleasurable feeling. In the present context *dukkha* bears the narrower meaning. As the Vibhaṅga explains, it is bodily painful feeling:

> Therein, what is pain? Bodily displeasure, bodily pain, the felt displeasure and pain born of body-contact, unpleasurable and painful feeling born of body-contact – this is called pain.[2] (Wr. tr.).

3. Joy (*somanassa*)

The joy that is made to disappear prior to the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* is mental happiness, the feeling present as *sukha* in the first three *jhānas*. The Vibhaṅga says:

> Therein, what is joy? Mental pleasure, mental happiness, the felt pleasure and happiness born of mind-contact, pleasurable and happy feeling born of mind contact – this is called joy.[3] (Wr. tr.).

4. Grief (*domanassa*)

Grief is the opposite of joy, that is, it is mental unpleasurable feeling. The Vibhaṅga defines the term occurring in the fourth *jhāna* formula thus:

> Therein, what is grief? Mental displeasure, mental pain, the felt displeasure and pain born of mind-contact, the unpleasurable and painful feeling born of mind-contact – this is called grief.[4] (Wr. tr.).

The fourth *jhāna* is said to arise following the abandonment of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of joy and grief. This statement seems to suggest that all four feelings first disappear prior to the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*. Such an interpretation,

---

1. “Tattha katamaṃ sukhaṃ? Yaṃ kāyikaṃ sataṃ kāyikaṃ sukhaṃ kāyasamphassajaṃ sātaṃ sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ kāyasamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā. Idaṃ vuccati sukhaṃ.” Vibh., p. 270.

2. “Tattha katamaṃ dukkhaṃ? Yaṃ kāyikaṃ asātaṃ kāyikaṃ dukkhaṃ kāyasamphassajaṃ asātaṃ dukkhaṃ vedayitaṃ kāyasamphassajā asātā dukkhā vedanā. Idaṃ vuccati dukkhaṃ.” Vibh., p. 271.

3. “Tattha katamaṃ somanassaṃ? Yaṃ cetasikaṃ sātaṃ cetasikaṃ sukhaṃ cetosamphassajaṃ sātaṃ sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ cetosamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā. Idaṃ vuccati somanassaṃ.” Vibh., p. 271.

4. *Ibid*.

however, is not correct. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya the Buddha says that the faculty of pain (*dukkhindriya*) ceases without remainder when the first *jhāna* is attained, the faculty of grief (*domanassindriya*) when the second *jhāna* is attained, the faculty of pleasure (*sukhindriya*) when the third *jhāna* is attained, and the faculty of joy (*somanassindriya*) when the fourth *jhāna* is attained.[1] Thus three of the four conditions for the fourth *jhāna* are fulfilled with the attainment of the first three *jhānas*, and only the fourth, the disappearance of joy, with the actual entrance upon the fourth *jhāna*.

The *Visuddhimagga* qualifies the Buddha's statement further and says that the four feelings – pain, grief, pleasure, and joy – actually cease at the moments of access to the first, second, third, and fourth *jhānas*, respectively. However, they only undergo "reinforced cessation" (*atisayanirodhattā*) with the attainment of the *jhāna* itself, which is why the Buddha says that in the *jhāna* they "cease without remainder" (*aparisesaṃ nirujjhati*).[2] Thus bodily pain, which ceases in the first *jhāna* access, can arise again prior to *jhāna* on account of insect bites, an uncomfortable seat, cold, heat, etc. But in the *jhāna* the whole body is suffused with bliss due to pervasion by rapture, and the pain-faculty then completely ceases, beaten out by opposition. Therefore the reinforced cessation of the pain-faculty takes place only with absorption in the first *jhāna*, not with access.[3]

Similarly, the grief faculty initially ceases in the second *jhāna* access, but can arise again when the body is weary and the mind vexed, due to the presence of applied and sustained thought. But at the level of second *jhāna* absorption, where applied and sustained thought are absent, mental grief does not reappear. The bodily pleasure-faculty, which ceases in the third *jhāna* access, can reappear when the meditator's body is pervaded by the subtle materiality originated by consciousness, but it does not arise in the third *jhāna* absorption where the rapture producing such materiality has ceased. Likewise, the faculty of joy which has ceased in the fourth *jhāna* access could be reawakened due to the proximity of the third *jhānic* happiness, but not in the fourth *jhāna* absorption where it is fully suppressed by equanimity.[4]

When three other feelings have been abandoned earlier, the question comes up why all four feelings are collected together and negated here, in the description of the fourth *jhāna*. The *Visuddhimagga* gives four reasons for grouping them. The first is to make it easier to grasp the nature of neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. The latter, being subtle and difficult to recognize, has to be apprehended by negating the alternatives, like a refractory cow that has to be caught by gathering all the cows in a pen and releasing the others one by one. The second reason is to show the condition for the neither-painful-nor-pleasurable mind-deliverance, which is the abandonment of the other four feelings. A third reason is to recommend this *jhāna* by showing its freedom from the grosser types of feeling. And a fourth is to show that greed and hatred are very far away.

1. SN. 5:213-15.

2. Vism., p. 134. PP., p. 172.

3. Vism., p. 134. PP., pp. 172-73.

4. PP., pp. 173-74. Vism., p. 135.

Pleasure is a condition for joy, which causes greed to possess the object producing pleasure, so when there is no pleasure greed is far away. Pain is a condition for grief, which causes hatred, so when there is no pain, hatred is far away.[1]

New Elements in the Jhāna

The fourth *jhāna* formula introduces several new terms and phrases which have not been used in the formulas for the preceding *jhānas*. First of all, it introduces a new feeling. This is the feeling of neither-pain-nor-pleasure (*adukkhamasukha*), which remains after the other four types of feeling have been eliminated. The Vibhaṅga explains *adukkhamasukha* as follows:

> Neither-pain-nor-pleasure: that mental concomitant which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, felt neither-pain-nor-pleasure born of mind-contact, neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling born of mind-contact – this is called neither-pain-nor-pleasure.[2] (Wr. tr.).

Neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, also called equanimous feeling (*upekkhāvedanā*), replaces *sukha* as the concomitant feeling of the *jhāna*. It also figures as an actual *jhāna*-factor. Thus this *jhāna* has two factors: neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling and one-pointedness of mind. Previously the ascent from one *jhāna* to the next was marked by the progressive elimination of the coarser *jhāna*-factors without any replacement. But in the move from the third to fourth *jhāna* there takes place a substitution. While one-pointedness remains constant, equanimous feeling enters to replace happiness, which has been abandoned.

Simultaneously with the progressive elimination and refinement of *jhāna* factors, there has occurred in the description of each succeeding *jhāna* the introduction of several new and complex elements. The second formula introduced confidence and mental unification, the third *jhāna* formula equanimity, mindfulness, and discernment. Consistent with this we now find in the move to the fourth *jhāna*, besides the abandonment of the grosser feelings and the augmentation of a new feeling, a new phrase composed of already familiar terms suggesting a new element – "purity of mindfulness due to equanimity." The Pāli compound *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* is explained by the Vibhaṅga in a way that makes it plain that the relation between the two terms is causal, not merely copulative: "This mindfulness is cleared, purified, clarified by equanimity; hence it is said to have purity of mindfulness due to equanimity."[3] (Wr. tr.). The *Visuddhimagga* also supports this interpretation: "For the mindfulness in this *jhāna* is quite purified, and its purification is effected by equanimity, not by anything else."[4]

---

1. *Ibid*.

2. "Adukkhamasukhanti yaṃ cetasikaṃ neva sātaṃ nāsātaṃ cetosamphassajaṃ adukkhamasukhaṃ vedayitaṃ ceto samphassajā adukkhamasukhā vedanā. Tena vuccati adukkhamasukhanti." Vibh., p. 271.

3. Vibh., p. 271.

4. PP., p. 174. Vism., p. 136.

The equanimity which purifies the mindfulness, according to the Vibhaṅga, is not neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, but mental neutrality (*majjhattatā cittassa*), the same as "specific neutrality" (*tatramajjhattatā*) discussed above.[1] Thus this *jhāna* has two kinds of eqanimity – [1] equanimous feeling, the affective tone which inclines neither towards pleasure nor pain, and [2] specific neutrality, the mental attitude of sublime impartiality free from attachment and aversion. Though the two are different factors, the one belonging to the aggregate of feelings (*vedanākkhandha*) and the other to the aggregate of mental formations (*sankhārakkhandha*), their concomitance is not fortuitous; for as specific neutrality becomes more and more refined it naturally tends to come into association with equanimous feeling, its hedonic counterpart.

Of the two, as we have seen, it is equanimity as specific neutrality that purifies mindfulness. Though both equanimity as specific neutrality and mindfulness are present in the earlier three *jhānas*, none among these is said to have purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. The reason is that the equanimity in the preceding *jhānas* is not purified, and thus cannot purify mindfulness and the other conascent states. In the other *jhānas* equanimity lacks clarity and distinctness because it is overshadowed by the opposing states and because it lacks association with equanimous feeling. The *Visuddhimagga* illustrates this with a vivid simile:

> …just as, although a crescent moon exists by day but is not purified or clear since it is outshone by the sun's radiance in the daytime or since it is deprived of the night, which is its ally owing to gentleness and owing to helpfulness to it, so too, this crescent moon of equanimity consisting in specific neutrality exists in the first *jhāna*, etc., but it is not purified since it is outshone by the glare of the opposing states consisting in applied thought, etc., and since it is deprived of the night of equanimity as feeling for its ally; and because it is not purified, the conascent mindfulness and other states are not purified either, like the unpurified crescent moon's radiance by day. That is why no one among these [first three *jhānas*] is said to have purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.[2]

But in the fourth *jhāna* the "crescent moon of specific neutrality" is completely pure because it is not outshone by the opposing states and because it appears against the background of equanimous feeling. Since it is pure, it is able to purify mindfulness and the other associated factors, just as a purified crescent moon is able to send forth a purified radiance.

So pervasive is the degree of purity reached in the fourth *jhāna* that to illustrate it the Buddha no longer uses the image of one thing suffusing another, as he did for the happiness and rapture of the earlier *jhānas*. Instead he employs the image of one thing covering another, that is, a white cloth covering a man's whole body from top to bottom:

1. Vibh., p. 271.

2. PP, p. 175. Vism., p. 136. *Expositor*, 1:238.

> Suppose a man were sitting wrapped in white cloth covering his whole body from head to toes, so that there were not a single spot of his body that is not covered by the white cloth. Similarly the bhikkhu sits pervading his whole body with a pure and lucid mind so that not a single spot of his entire body is left unpervaded by that pure and lucid mind.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The Abhidhammic system counts thirty factors in the fourth *jhāna*. From the original set of thirty-three, *vitakka*, *vicāra* and *pīti* are excluded, and the feeling is changed to *adukkhamasukha*. Compassion and sympathetic joy do not unite with this *jhāna*, as they require association with pleasant feeling while this *jhāna* has neutral feeling.

The Fivefold Scheme of the Jhānas

Whereas the suttas arrange the *jhānas* into a fourfold system, the texts of the Abhidhammapiṭaka present the same states in two ways – in terms of the familiar fourfold system of the suttas and also in terms of a fivefold system. The fourfold presentation of *jhāna* becomes fivefold through the separate rather than simultaneous elimination of applied thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*). The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* spells out the constitution of the five *jhānas* one by one in terms of their factors:

> First *jhāna* consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy [rapture], happiness, and one-pointedness.
>
> Second *jhāna* consciousness together with sustained application, joy [rapture], happiness, and one-pointedness.
>
> Third *jhāna* consciousness together with joy [rapture], happiness and one-pointedness.
>
> Fourth *jhāna* consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness.
>
> Fifth *jhāna* consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.[2]

The question may arise why a fivefold system should be presented along with the fourfold system. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* offers two reasons: one is out of

1. "Seyyathāpi mahārāja puriso odātena vatthena sasīsaṃ pārupitvā nisinno assa, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa odātena vatthena apphuṭaṃ assa, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja bhikkhu imaṃ eva kāyaṃ parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena pharitvā nisinno hoti, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena apphuṭaṃ hoti." DN. 1:76.

2. "Vitakkavicārapītisukh'ekaggatāsahitaṃ paṭhamajjhāna kusalacittaṃ.

Vicārapītisukh'ekaggatā sahitaṃ dutiyajjhānakusalacittaṃ.

Pītisukh'ekaggatā sahitaṃ tatiyajjhānakusalacittaṃ.

Sukh'ekaggatāsahitaṃ catutthajjhānakusalacittaṃ.

Upekkh'ekaggatā sahitaṃ pañcamajjhānakusalacittaṃ." Nārada, *Manual*, pp. 42-44. Note that "initial application" is *vitakka*, which we render as "applied thought" and "sustained application" is *vicāra*, our "sustained thought."

consideration for the differing inclinations of individuals (*puggalajjhāsaya*), the other is for the sake of elegance of teaching (*desanāvilāsa*). It explains the first by reference to the tradition that the Buddha first expounded the Abhidhammapiṭaka to the devas of the heavenly worlds:

> In the assembled gathering of the spirits (*devas*), to some spirits only initial application of mind appeared gross, and sustained application of mind, rapture, pleasure, one-pointedness of mind appeared good.[1]

It was for the benefit of those *devas*, according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* that the Buddha expanded the fourfold scheme of *jhānas* into a fivefold scheme. In explanation of the second reason the commentary says:

> Hence, because of the vastness of his knowledge, the Teacher, who is skillful in arranging his teaching, and who has attained the [art of] embellishing it, fixes that teaching by whatever factor that has come to hand, and in any way he chooses.[2]

In following the fivefold system of *jhānas*, a meditator who has mastered the first *jhāna* and aspires to go higher reviews its factors and finds only applied thought (*vitakka*) to be gross. Thus he endeavors to eliminate only applied thought, and attains a second *jhāna* which is devoid of applied thought (*avitakkaṃ*) but still associated with sustained thought (*vicāramattaṃ*). This second *jhāna* of the fivefold scheme is the addition which is not present in the fourfold scheme. After mastering the second *jhāna*, the meditator finds sustained thought to be gross, eliminates it, and attains a third *jhāna* which is identical with the second *jhāna* of the fourfold system. The fourth and fifth *jhānas* of the fivefold system are the same as the third and fourth *jhānas* of the fourfold system, respectively.

The two different systems seem to answer to the differing capacities of meditators for progressing along the scale of mental unification. This difference in capacity could stem either from their differing abilities to comprehend *vitakka* and *vicāra* simultaneously or from their differing abilities to abandon them simultaneously. The progress of one following the fourfold method is more rapid, as he eliminates two factors in moving from the first to second *jhāna*. Yet both start from the same place, move through the same range of spiritual experience, and (providing they succeed in reaching the highest *jhāna* in their respective systems) arrive in the end at the same destination.

The two meditators can be compared to two mountain climbers. Both start out at the foot of a mountain at the same time. Both may reach the same initial rest station at the same time. But then their rates of progress may show a difference. The stronger may continue on more quickly, bypass the second rest station, and go right on to the third before stopping. The weaker will advance more slowly and have to make separate stops at the

1. *Expositor*, 1:239. "Sannisinnadevaparisāya kira ekaccānaṃ devānaṃ vitakko eva oḷārikato upaṭṭhāti, vicārapītisukh'ekaggatā santato." Dhs.A., p. 223.

2. *Expositor*, 1:240. "Tasmā ñāṇamahattatāya desanāvidhānesu kusalo desanā vilāsappatto satthā yaṃ yaṃ aṇgaṃ labbhati; tassa tassa vasena yathā yathā labbhati tathā tathā desanaṃ niyameti." Dhs.A., p. 224.

second and third rest stations. Both will stop at the fourth and at the fifth station at the top. Thus for both mountain climbers their position is the same when starting out at the bottom of the mountain, at the first station, and when reaching the top. They differ only in their rates of progress and in the number of stops they have to make to arrive at the top. Similarly for the two meditators of the fourfold and fivefold systems. Their first *jhāna* is the same, and their final achievement is the same. But the follower of the fivefold system has made an additional stop passed over by the follower of the fourfold system. This stop is the added second *jhāna* of the fivefold system, free from applied thought but having sustained thought.

The fivefold reckoning of *jhāna* first appears in the Abhidhammapiṭaka and remains as a distinctive feature of the "Abhidhamma method," yet this system has a definite basis in the suttas. Though the suttas always speak of four *jhānas*, they divide concentration (*samādhi*) into three types: a concentration with applied thought and sustained thought, a concentration without applied thought but with sustained thought, and a concentration without either applied thought or sustained thought.[1] Thus in the Saṃyutta Nikāya the Buddha calls this threefold concentration the "path to the unconditioned"[2] and in the Aṅguttara Nikāya he declares:

> When, monk, this concentration is thus made-become and developed by you, then you should make this concentration become with initial and sustained application [of thought], make it become without initial application [of thought], but with sustained application [of thought] only; make it become without either initial or sustained application [of thought].[3]

The commentary to the Aṅguttara Nikāya glosses this as "attaining fourfold and fivefold *jhāna*."[4] (Wr. tr.). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* explains that while the fourfold scheme of *jhānas* includes concentration with both applied and sustained thought and without either of the two, it does not deal with that concentration having only sustained thought; thence an additional *jhāna* necessitating a fivefold system is required to deal with it.[5]

In the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* the five *jhānas* are presented only in skeletal form, in terms of their defining factors. In the Dhammasaṅgaṇi and the Vibhaṅga they are presented with full formulas. Their descriptions of the first, third, fourth, and fifth *jhānas* are identical with each other, and with the standard descriptions of the first, second, third, and fourth *jhānas* respectively of the fourfold scheme. However, in their formulas for the second *jhāna*, the two canonical Abhidhamma treatises differ in some

1. The Pāli for the three is: *savitakko savicāro samādhi*, *avitakkavicāramatto samādhi*, and *avitakko avicāro samādhi*.

2. SN. 4:362-63. DN. 3:274.

3. GS. 4:200. "Yato kho te bhikkhu ayaṃ samādhi evaṃ bhāvito hoti bahulīkato, tato tvaṃ bhikkhu imaṃ samādiṃ savitakkaṃpi savicāraṃ bhāveyyāsi, avitakkampi vicāramattaṃ bhāveyyāsi avitakkaṃ pi avicāraṃ bhāveyyāsi." AN. 4:301.

4. "Catukkapañcakajjhānaṃ pāpiyamāno." AN.A. 3:242.

5. Dhs.A., P. 224. *Expositor*, 1:240.

interesting respects. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi formula runs as follows: "He enters and abides in the second *jhāna*, which is without applied thought, has only sustained thought, and is filled with rapture and happiness born of concentration."[1] (Wr. tr.). The Vibhaṅga formula states:

> Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states of mind, he enters and dwells in the second *jhāna* which is accompanied only by sustained thought with rapture and happiness born of seclusion.[2] (Wr. tr.).

Thus the Vibhaṅga version includes a phrase about seclusion from sense pleasures and unwholesome states, while the Dhammasaṅgaṇi version omits this and instead simply describes the *jhāna*. Again, the two differ in the way they qualify the rapture and happiness existing in the *jhāna*. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi says they are "born of concentration" (*samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ*), the Vibhaṅga that they are born of seclusion (*vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ*).

The preliminary phrase in the Vibhaṅga version appears to be an inappropriate repetition of the beginning of the first *jhāna* formula, and thus can perhaps be dismissed as an editorial error made by the ancient redactors of the text. The second difference between the two works, that concerning the cause of rapture and happiness, may also be due to an editorial oversight, but is more difficult to resolve. When explaining the phrase *samādhijaṃ* in connection with the second *jhāna* of the tetradic scheme, the *Visuddhimagga* said that "born of concentration" could be understood to mean that the rapture and happiness of the second *jhāna* are born of the first *jhāna* concentration, or born of the associated second *jhāna* concentration. It then added:

> It is only this concentration [of the second *jhāna*] that is quite worthy to be called 'concentration' because of its complete confidence and extreme immobility due to absence of disturbance by applied and sustained thought.[3]

Now if we accept the idea that the concentration responsible for producing the *pīti* and *sukha* of the second tetradic *jhāna* is the first *jhāna* concentration, then it follows logically that the *pīti* and *sukha* of the second *jhāna* in the fivefold scheme can also be born of the same concentration. Thus the reading of the Dhammasaṅgaṇi would be correct. However, we also have to take account of the *Visuddhimagga*'s remark that the word "concentration" is only fully appropriate in the absence of disturbance by applied and sustained thought. Then, because sustained thought is present in the pentadic second *jhāna*, it is questionable whether the phrase "born of concentration" can belong to the formula. In this case the preference would go to the Vibhaṅga reading. Due to the ambiguity of interpretative method, the difference seems impossible to settle with complete definiteness, and must just be left for the present as unresolved.

---

1. "Avitakkaṃ vicāramattaṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." Dhs., p. 47.

2. "Vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi avitakkaṃ vicāramattaṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." Vibh., p. 275.

3. PP., p. 164. "… ayaṃ eva samādhi samādhī ti vattabbataṃ arahati, vitakkavicārakkhobhavirahena ativiya acalattā suppasannattā ca." Vism., p. 127.

Concluding Remarks

From our inquiry two important points emerge concerning the dynamics of *jhāna* attainment. First, the ascent from *jhāna* to *jhāna* is signalled by a progressive elimination of *jhāna* factors. The first *jhāna*, as we saw, has five factors. In moving to the second *jhāna* two factors, *vitakka* and *vicāra*, are abandoned, in moving to the third *pīti* is abandoned, and in moving to the fourth *sukha* is abandoned, with "neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling" coming in to replace *sukha*. This process of elimination, we can assume, involves concurrently an intensification of concentration, whereby the energy that was diffused among the coarser, more numerous *jhāna* factors comes to be invested in the subtler and fewer factors, enabling the concentration to gain in depth and intensity.

The second point to be noticed is that in the formulas for each of the ascending *jhānas* new elements were mentioned, most of which did not correspond to any *jhāna* factors. The second *jhāna* formula added "internal confidence," the equivalent of faith, a non-factor. The third *jhāna* formula added equanimity, mindfulness, and discernment, and the fourth added "purification of mindfulness due to equanimity." These elements, though not themselves *jhāna* factors, are still deserving of mention. The *jhāna* factors are the states which directly exercise the *jhānic* functions of countering the hindrances and unifying the mind on the object. But beyond these can be found, in each *jhāna*, a number of other factors which contribute to the distinctive character of the attainment, and these have been selected for inclusion in the formulas descriptive of the *jhānas*. This procedure helps make it clear that the *jhānas* are not abstract states completely susceptible to schematic analysis, but living experiences with a vitality and directness that elude mere intellectual treatment.

Chapter Six

BEYOND THE FOUR JHĀNAS

Following the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* there are several options open to a meditator. These can be grouped together into three basic categories. One is the attainment of the four *āruppas*, immaterial *jhānas* involving further concentration and refinement of mental serenity. A second – which as we will see generally presupposes the immaterial *jhānas* as prerequisites – is the development of the *abhiññās*, higher faculties of knowledge, in some cases issuing in supernormal powers. A third alternative is the cultivation of wisdom through insight into the nature of phenomena, which brings the destruction of the defilements and results in emancipation from *saṃsāra*. In the present chapter we will explore the first and second of these three alternatives, closing with some remarks concerning the relationship between *jhānas* and rebirth. Then in the next two chapters we will examine the place of *jhāna* in the development of wisdom leading to final deliverance.

Throughout the following discussion it should be borne in mind that the attainment of the immaterial *jhānas* and the exercise of supernormal powers are not essential to achieving the ultimate Buddhist goal, the realization of *nibbāna*. What is essential is the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which does not necessarily include the *āruppas* and *abhiññās*. However, because these latter two sets of practices can contribute to the growth of calm and insight and embellish the spiritual perfection of a yogin, the Buddha included them in his discipline. There they have remained as options open for meditators inclined to develop them.

The Four Immaterial Jhānas

Beyond the four *jhānas* lie four higher attainments in the scale of mental unification. These attainments are collectively known as the four formless or immaterial *jhānas* (*arūpajjhānas*); the lower four attainments come to be called, in contrast, the four fine material *jhānas* (*rūpajjhānas*) or simply the four *jhānas*. The immaterial *jhānas* are individually designated, not by numerical names like their predecessors, but by the names of their objective spheres: the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception.[1] They receive the designation "formless" or "immaterial" for two reasons: [1] because they are achieved by surmounting all perceptions of material form (*rūpa*), even of the subtle material form of the counterpart sign which serves as the object for the fine material *jhānas*; and [2] because they are the subjective counterparts of the immaterial planes of existence.

---

1. In Pāli: *ākāsānañcāyatana*, *viññāṇañcāyatana*, *ākiñcaññāyatana*, and *nevesaññānāsaññāyatana*.

The terms *rūpajjhāna* and *arūpajjhāna*, fine material *jhāna* and immaterial *jhāna*, do not appear in the main *nikāyas* of the Suttapiṭaka. The terms *rūpāvacaraṃ jhānaṃ* and *arūpāvacaraṃ jhānaṃ*, "fine material sphere *jhāna*" and "immaterial sphere *jhāna*," appear occasionally in the Abhidhammapiṭaka,[1] but it is not until the period of the commentaries that such names became common. In the suttas the formless attainments are referred to sometimes by the collective name *āruppa* "immaterial states," or as the *cattāro āruppā*, "the four immaterial states."[2] They are also called "peaceful emancipations, transcending material form, immaterial" (Wr. tr.) or simply "peaceful abodes".[3] Most often they are merely enumerated in their order of attainment without being brought together under any group label.

Before turning to consider the immaterial *jhānas* individually, some important remarks are called for concerning their "internal constitution." We saw in the previous chapter that the movement from any lower *jhāna* to its successor involves the elimination of the coarser *jhāna* factors. The refinement of consciousness that occurs through this movement thus hinges upon actual changes being effected in the composition of the states of consciousness corresponding to the *jhānas*. However, in ascending from the fourth fine material *jhāna* to the first immaterial *jhāna*, and then from one immaterial *jhāna* to another, no changes in the compositional factors of consciousness are required. In other words, the fourth fine material *jhāna* and all four formless attainments have precisely the same kinds of factors entering into their internal constitution. The factors in each higher attainment are subtler than those in its predecessors, more peaceful and more sublime, but they do not differ in number or in their essential nature. The climb from one formless attainment to another is brought about by changing the object of concentration, not by eliminating or replacing component factors. For this reason the treatises of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, such as the Dhammasaṅgaṇi and the Vibhaṅga, treat the four *āruppas* as modes of the fourth *jhāna*, combining the formula for each with the general formula for the fourth *jhāna*.[4] All five states – the fourth fine material *jhāna* and the four immaterial *jhānas* – contain the same basic constellation of mental concomitants (*cetasikas*) and the same two *jhāna* factors, namely one-pointedness and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. Thence from the standpoint of the Abhidhamma, which defines a class of consciousness (*citta*) by its components, the four types of consciousness belonging to the four formless attainments are modes of the fourth *jhāna* consciousness according to the fourfold scheme, and of the fifth *jhāna* consciousness according to the fivefold scheme.

The First Āruppa: *The Base of Boundless Space*

The four formless attainments must be achieved in the order in which they are presented in the texts – that is, beginning with the base of boundless space and culminating in the

1. Dhs., p. 145.

2. DN. 3:275.

3. "Santā vimokkhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā," MN. 1:33. "Santā vihārā." MN. 1:41.

4. Dhs., pp. 68-69. Vibh., p. 276.

base of neither perception nor non-perception. The motivation which initially leads a yogin to seek the immaterial states is a clear perception of the dangers posed by gross physical matter. As it is said in the Majjhima Nikāya:

> It is in virtue of matter that wielding of sticks, wielding of knives, quarrels, brawls and disputes take place; but that does not exist at all in the immaterial state, and in this expectation he enters upon the way of dispassion for only material things, for the fading and cessation of only those.[1]

He might also become repelled by matter as a result of considering the multitude of afflictions to which the physical body is vulnerable, such as eye diseases, ear diseases, and so forth. Aspiring to escape from these dangers connected with material form, the meditator must first attain the four *jhānas* of the fine material sphere. He then enters the fourth *jhāna*, taking as his object any of the *kasiṇas* except the limited space *kasiṇa*.[2] The limited space *kasiṇa* is unsuitable because it does not allow for a separation between the *kasiṇa* itself and the space it covers, a separation, we will see, necessary for reaching the first formless *jhāna*.

By achieving the fourth fine material *jhāna* the meditator has risen above gross matter but still has not completely transcended all material form. The reason is that the self-luminous counterpart sign, the object of his *jhāna*, is a subtle type of material form. To reach the formless attainments he must desire to surmount as well the materiality of the *kasiṇa*. Such a desire can be induced by contemplating the *kasiṇa* materiality as the counterpart of gross matter sharing to some extent its defects. Buddhaghosa illustrates how this is done by means of a simile. If a timid man is pursued by a snake in the forest he will flee from it as fast as he can. If he should later see something resembling the snake, such as a palm leaf with a streak painted on it, a creeper, a rope, or a crack in the ground, he would become fearful and anxious and would not want to look at it. The time the meditator was frightened by seeing the danger in gross matter is like the time the man saw the snake. When the meditator escapes gross matter by reaching the fourth *jhāna*, this is like the time the man flees from the snake. The time the meditator observes the subtle matter of the *kasiṇa* to be the counterpart of gross matter and wants to surmount it is like the time the man sees the object resembling a snake and is afraid to look at it.[3]

Once he has generated a strong desire to reach the immaterial *jhānas* the meditator must achieve the fivefold mastery over the fourth *jhāna*. Then, after emerging from the fourth *jhāna*, he perceives the dangers in the *jhāna* and the benefits in the higher attainment. The dangers are: [1] that the fourth *jhāna* has an object consisting in material form and hence is still connected with gross physical matter; [2] that it is close to happiness, a factor of the third *jhāna*: and [3] that it is grosser than the immaterial attainments. On

1. PP., p. 354. "Dissante kho pana rūpādhikaranaṃ daṇḍādāna satthādāna kaḷaha viggaha vivāda, n'atthi kho pan'etaṃ sabbaso ārūpeti: so iti patisañcikkhāya rūpānaṃ yeva nibbidāya, virāgāya, nirodhāya paṭipanno hoti." MN. 1:410.

2. See above, Chapter II, p. 42.

3. PP., pp. 354-55. Vism., p. 272.

the other hand, the meditator sees the base of boundless space as more peaceful and sublime than the fourth *jhāna* and as more safely removed from materiality. However, there is no effort to eliminate *jhāna* factors, as both the fourth fine material *jhāna* and the four immaterial *jhānas* have the same two factors, as we mentioned.[1]

By reflecting on its dangers the meditator ends his attachment to the fourth *jhāna*; he then sets out to reach the base of boundless space. The method for attaining this first formless *jhāna* is to mentally extend the *kasiṇa* "to the limit of the world-sphere, or as far as he likes," and then to remove the *kasiṇa* by attending exclusively to the space it covered without adverting to the *kasiṇa*.[2]

The original *kasiṇa* which provided the preliminary sign (*parikammanimitta*) for concentration was, as we saw, a disc-like object, in the case of the earth *kasiṇa* a disc filled with reddish-brown clay. When practising preliminary concentration the meditator kept focussing his mind upon this disc until there appeared the learning sign (*uggahanimitta*), i.e. a mental image apprehended as clearly as the physical object. Concentration on the learning sign gave rise to the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*), the conceptualized image used as the object for access concentration and the fine material *jhānas*. After entering each *jhāna*, the meditator learned to extend the sign outwards by degrees, making the visualized *kasiṇa* cover increasingly larger areas up to a world-system or more. Now, to reach the base of boundless space, the meditator must remove the *kasiṇa* by attending exclusively to the space it has been made to cover without attending to the *kasiṇa*:

> When he is removing it, he neither folds it up like a mat nor withdraws it like a cake from a tin. It is simply that he does not advert to it or give attention to it or review it; it is when he neither adverts to it nor gives attention to it nor reviews it but gives his attention exclusively to the space touched by it [regarding that] as 'Space, space', that he is said to 'remove the kasina'.[3]

Taking as his object the space left after the removal of the *kasiṇa*, the yogin adverts to it as "boundless space, boundless space," or simply as "space, space," striking at it with applied and sustained thought. He cultivates this practice again and again, repeatedly developing it until the concept reaches maturity. When his development is fully matured, then the consciousness pertaining to the base of boundless space arises with boundless space as its object. It is the first wholesome consciousness of the immaterial sphere, and appears in the cognitive series in the same place that the first *jhāna* appeared in its own thought-process. In the prior moments of the series, the three or four moments of access concentration are always associated with equanimous feeling and pertain to the sense sphere; the fourth or fifth moment, the moment of absorption, pertains to the imaterial sphere.[4]

---

1. PP., p. 355. Vism., p. 272.

2. *Ibid*.

3. PP., p. 355. Vism., p. 272.

4. PP., p. 356. Vism., p. 272.

The standard formula for the base of boundless space, as presented in the suttas, is as follows:

> With the complete surmounting of perceptions of matter, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, with non-attention to perceptions of variety [aware of] 'unbounded space', he enters upon and dwells in the base consisting of boundless space.[1]

There are four phrases in this formula worth discussing separately:

1. with the complete surmounting of perceptions of matter (*sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā*);
2. with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance (*paṭigha saññānaṃ atthagamā*);
3. with non-attention to perceptions of variety (*nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā*); and
4. unbounded space (*ananto ākāso*).

Now we will treat each of these phrases in turn.

1. "With the complete surmounting of perceptions of matter" (*sabbaso rupasaññānaṃ samatikkamā*)

The phrase "perceptions of matter", according to the commentaries, means both the fine-material *jhānas* and their objects, the *kasiṇas*. The Vibhaṅga explains "perceptions of matter" as

> … the perception, perceiving, perceivedness, in one who has attained a fine-material-sphere attainment or in one who has been reborn there or in one who is abiding in bliss there in this present life.[2]

Thus the Vibhaṅga identifies the term with the *jhānas*. But the commentary holds that the object should also be understood to be included, since the attainment of the first immaterial *jhāna* requires that the subtle material form of the *kasiṇas* be relinquished.[3] We saw that in developing the fine-material *jhānas* the meditator began with a coarse physical object, shifted his focus to the subtle form of the counter-part sign, and ascended from the first to the fourth *jhāna* by abandoning various mental factors while retaining the same object. But now he must give up, not only the perceptions of material form belonging to the four *jhānas*, but also the object of these perceptions – the fine material form of the counterpart sign – since it is impossible to attain the base of boundless space without overcoming all perceptions of material form.

---

1. PP., p. 356. "Sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭighasaññānaṃ atthagamā nānatta saññānaṃ amanasikārā ananto ākāsoti ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati." DN. 1:183.

2. PP., p. 357. "Rūpāvacarasamāpattiṃ samāpannassa vā upapannassa vā diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārissa vā saññā sañjānanā sañjānitattaṃ." Vibh., p. 272.

3. PP., pp. 357-58. Vism., p. 273.

2. “With the disappearance of perceptions of resistance” (*paṭighasaññānaṃ atthagamā*)

The word *paṭigha*, which we translate here as “resistance,” generally signifies aversion, repugnance, or anger. Here, however, it is used to mean sensory impact, the striking (*gha* = *han*) against one another (*paṭi*) of the sense organs and their respective sense objects. Perceptions of resistance are thus sensory perceptions. As it is said in the Vibhaṅga:

> Here, what are perceptions of resistance? Perceptions of visible objects, perceptions of sounds, perceptions of odours, perceptions of flavours, perceptions of tangible objects – these are called ‘perceptions of resistance’.[1]

The commentaries elucidate this as the non-occurrence of any of the ten types of sense consciousness, five the result of wholesome *kamma* and five the result of unwholesome *kamma*:

> … with the complete disappearance, the abandoning, the non-arising, of these ten kinds of perceptions of resistance, that is to say, of the five profitable-resultant and five unprofitable-resultant; causing their non-occurrence, is what is meant.[2]

It should be noted that only perception through the five physical senses is excluded from the base of boundless space. No mention is made of the disappearance of *dhamma-saññā*, perception of mental objects, for the reason that this type of perception remains. Although sensory perceptions are also absent in the four *jhānas*, their disappearance is accentuated here to emphasize the fading away of attachment to material form and to arouse a greater interest in the formless *jhānas*.[3]

3. “With non-attention to perceptions of variety” (*nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā*)

According to the Vibhaṅga, perceptions of variety are “the perception, perceiving, perceivedness, in one who has not attained and possesses either mind-element or mind-consciousness element.”[4] (Wr. tr.). Perceptions of variety are thus the non-sensory perceptions in the states of consciousness of those who are not absorbed in a meditative attainment. The phrase “possesses either mind-element or mind-consciousness element” excludes the bare sense perceptions, the elimination of which is already covered by “perceptions of resistance.” When the text lays down non-attention to perceptions of variety as a condition for reaching the base of boundless space, this means that the yogin

---

1. PP., p. 358. “Tattha katamā paṭighasaññā? Rūpasaññā, saddasaññā, gandhasaññā, rasasaññā, phoṭṭabbasaññā. Imā vuccanti paṭighasaññāyo.” Vibh., p. 272.

2. PP., p. 358. “Tāsaṃ kusalavipākānaṃ pañcannaṃ, akusalavipākānaṃ pañcannaṃ ti sabbaso dasannaṃ pi paṭighasaññānaṃ atthangamā pahānā asamuppādā; appavattiṃ katvāti vuttaṃ hoti.” Vism., p. 274.

3. PP., p. 358. Vism., p. 274.

4. “Asamāpannassa manodhātu samaṅgissa vā mano viññāṇadhātu samaṅgissa vā saññā, sañjānanā, sanjānitattaṃ.” Vibh., p. 272.

must not advert to these perceptions having various diversified objects, since to attend to them or review them is obstructive to attaining the immaterial *jhānas*.[1]

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, the phrase "with the surmounting of perceptions of matter" signifies the abandonment of all fine material-sphere states, and the other two phrases the abandonment of and non-attention to all sense-sphere consciousness and its concomitants.[2]

4. "Unbounded space' (*ananto ākāso*)

The "unbounded space" which the meditator becomes aware of is the space left by the removal of the *kasiṇa* after the latter has been extended boundlessly. The space is called "unbounded" or "endless" (*ananta*) because neither a beginning boundary nor a terminal boundary can be perceived for it. The meditator "enters upon and dwells in the base of boundless space" in the sense that after reaching that attainment he abides in the *jhāna* which has the base of boundless space as its object.

The Second Āruppa: *The Base of Boundless Consciousness* (*viññāṇañcāyatana*)

To attain the second immaterial *jhāna* the yogin must gain mastery over the base consisting of boundless space; then he must discern its defects. The first immaterial state is defective, firstly, because it is still close to the fine material *jhānas*, and secondly, because it is not as peaceful as the base consisting of boundless consciousness. By reflecting on these defects he develops indifference to the attainment and turns his attention to the base of boundless consciousness.

To develop the second *āruppa* the meditator focuses upon the consciousness that occurred pervading the boundless space of the first *āruppa*.[3] In other words, the second *āruppa* has as its object the consciousness pertaining to the first *āruppa*. Since the object of the first *āruppa*, space, was boundless, the consciousness of this object also contained an aspect of boundlessness, and it is to this boundless consciousness that the aspirant for the second *āruppa* should advert. He is not to attend to it merely as boundless, but as "boundless consciousness" or simply as "consciousness." As he does so the hindrances are suppressed and the mind enters access concentration. He continues to cultivate this sign again and again, until the consciousness belonging to the base of boundless consciousness arises in absorption. The cognitive series should be understood as in the previous attainment, with the appropriate changes made to fit the case.

The formula for the attainment of the base consisting of boundless consciousness reads thus: "By completely surmounting the base consisting of boundless space, [aware of] 'unbounded consciousness', he enters upon and dwells in the base consisting of boundless conciousness".[4] According to the word-commentary on this passage, the

1. PP., p. 359. Vism., p. 274.

2. PP., p. 359. Vism., p. 275.

3. PP., p. 360. Vism., p. 275.

4. PP., p. 361. "Sabbaso ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamā, anantaṃ viññāṇaṃ ti viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati." Vism., p. 254.

phrase "base consisting of boundless space" signifies both the first immaterial *jhāna* and the object of that *jhāna*. The surmounting of the base means the overcoming of both the *jhāna* and its object together, since the base of boundless consciousness is to be entered and dwelt in by passing beyond both aspects of the base of boundless space.

To be aware of "unbounded consciousness" is to give attention to the consciousness that occurred pervading the space left by the removal of the *kasiṇa*. Thus the object of this *jhāna* is the consciousness that had pervaded boundless space in the previous *jhāna*. As it is said in the Vibhaṅga: "He gives attention to that same space pervaded by consciousness, he pervades boundlessly, hence 'Unbounded consciousness' is said."[1] And the commentator adds: "What is meant by 'He pervades boundlessly' is that 'he gives attention to that same consciousness which had pervaded that space'."[2] The boundless consciousness which pervaded boundless space is itself the base consisting in boundless consciousness, and the *jhāna* as well, because it is founded upon this base, derivatively comes to be called by the same name.

The Third Āruppa: *The Base of Nothingness* (ākiñcaññāyatana)

To attain the next *āruppa*, the base of nothingness, the meditator who has mastered the base of boundless consciousness in the five ways must perceive this attainment as defective due to its proximity to the base of boundless space and its grossness compared to the next higher *jhāna*. By recognizing these dangers the meditator removes his attachment to the base of boundless consciousness; then he should advert to the base of nothingness as more peaceful. The way to concentrate on the base consisting of nothingness is to

> give attention to the [present] non-existence, voidness, secluded aspect of that same [past] consciousness belonging to the base consisting of boundless space which became the object of [the consciousness belonging to] the base consisting of boundless consciousness.[3]

In other words, to attain the base of nothingness the yogin has to focus upon the present absence or non-existence of the consciousness belonging to the base consisting of boundless space. He is advised to advert to it over and over, thinking to himself "There is not, there is not" or "void, void," etc. When his practice matures there arises in absorption consciousness belonging to the base of nothingness, making the non-existence of the consciousness of boundless space its object.

Though both the base of boundless consciousness and base of nothingness are concerned objectively with the consciousness of the base of boundless space, they relate to it in opposite ways. The second *āruppa* objectifies it positively: it focusses upon the

---

1. PP., p. 361. "Anantaṃ viññāṇanti taṃyeva ākāsaṃ viññāṇena phutaṃ manasikaroti anantaṃ pharati. Tena vuccati anantaṃ viññāṇanti." Vibh., p. 273.

2. PP., p. 362. "Anantaṃ pharati, taṃ yeva ākāsaṃ phuṭaṃ viññāṇaṃ manasikarotī ti vuttaṃ hoti." Vism., p. 276.

3. PP., p. 362. "Tass'eva viññāṇañcāyatanārammaṇabhūtassa ākāsānañcāyatanaviññāṇassa abhāvo, suññatā, vivittākāro manasikātabbo." Vism., p. 277.

consciousness of boundless space as present and seeks to appropriate its boundlessness for itself. The third *āruppa*, in contrast, relates to the consciousness of the base of boundless space negatively. It excludes this consciousness from awareness, making the absence or non-existence of this consciousness its object. As the *Visuddhimagga* explains:

> Suppose a man sees a community of bhikkhus gathered together in a meeting hall or some such place and then goes elsewhere; then after the bhikkhus have risen at the conclusion of the business for which they had met and have departed, the man comes back, and as he stands in the doorway looking at that place again, he sees it only as void, he sees it only as secluded, he does not think 'so many bhikkhus have died, so many have left the district', but rather he sees only the nonexistence thus, 'this is void, secluded' – so too, having formerly dwelt seeing with the *jhāna* eye belonging to the base consisting of boundless consciousness the [earlier] consciousness that had occurred making the space its object, [now] when that consciousness has disappeared owing to his giving attention to the preliminary work in the way beginning 'there is not, there is not', he dwells seeing only its non-existence, in other words its departedness when this consciousness has arisen in absorption.[1]

The texts describe the attainment of the third *āruppa* with a standard formula: "By completely surmounting the base consisting of boundless consciousness, [aware that] 'There is nothing', he enters upon and dwells in the base consisting of nothingness."[2] According to the commentary on this formula, the "base of boundless consciousness" which must be surmounted is both the second immaterial *jhāna* and its object together, since the third immaterial *jhāna* must be reached by passing beyond the second and by relinquishing attachment to its object.[3] The phrase "there is nothing" is explained in the Vibhaṅga thus: "'There is nothing': he makes that same consciousness non-existent, makes it absent, makes it disappear, sees that 'there is nothing', hence 'There is nothing' is said."[4] To make "that same consciousness," i.e., the consciousness belonging to the base of boundless space, nonexistent means not to advert to it or attend to it, but to attend only to its non-existence or absence. By so doing, the yogin "enters and dwells in the base consisting of nothingness." The base consisting of nothingness, which is the

1. PP., p. 363. ''Yathā nāma puriso maṇḍalamālādīsu kenacid eva karaṇīyena sannipatitaṃ bhikkhu-saṅghaṃ disvā katthaci gantvā sannipātakiccāvasāne uṭṭhāya pakkantesu bhikkhūsu āgantvā dvāre ṭhatvā puna taṃ ṭhānaṃ olokento suññaṃ eva passati, vivittaṃ eva passati, nāssa evaṃ hoti, ettakā nāma bhikkhū kālaṃkatā vā, disāpakkantā vā ti, atha kho, suññaṃ idaṃ vivittaṅ ti natthibhāvaṃ eva passati, evaṃ eva pubbe ākāse pavattitaviññāṇaṃ viññāṇañcāyatanajjānacakkhunā passanto viharitvā, n'atthi n'atthī ti ādinā parikammamanasikārena antarahite tasmiṃ viññāṇe tassa apagamanasankhātaṃ abhāvaṃ eva passanto viharati." Vism., p. 277.

2. PP., p. 363. "Sabbaso viññānañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma, n'atthi kiñci ti ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ upasam-pajja viharati ti." Vibh., p. 254.

3. PP., pp. 363-64. Vism., p. 278.

4. PP., p. 364. Vism., p. 272.

foundation for the third formless *jhāna*, is "a term for the disappearance of the consciousness belonging to the base consisting of boundless space."[1]

***The Fourth Āruppa*: *The Base of Neither Perception nor Non-perception* (nevasaññā nāsaññāyatana)**

If the yogin wants to go further and reach the fourth and highest *āruppa* attainment, he must first achieve fivefold mastery over the base of nothingness. Then he should contemplate the danger in that attainment, consisting in its proximity to the lower attainments. He should reflect upon the base of neither perception nor non-perception as superior and more peaceful. He can also reflect upon the unsatisfactoriness of perception, thinking: "perception is a disease, perception is a boil, perception is a dart… this is peaceful, this is sublime, that is to say, neither perception nor non-perception."[2] In this way he ends his attachment to the base of nothingness and arouses a desire to attain the base of neither perception nor non-perception.

The base of neither perception nor non-perception has as its object the four mental aggregates that constitute the attainment of the base of nothingness – that is, the aggregates of feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Just as the second *āruppa* took as its object the consciousness belonging to the first *āruppa*, so the fourth *āruppa* takes as its object the consciousness and associated states belonging to the third *āruppa*. Focussing on the four mental aggregates of the base of nothingness, the meditator adverts to the base as "peaceful, peaceful," reviewing it and striking at it with applied and sustained thought. As he does so the hindrances are suppressed, the mind enters access concentration, and then passes into absorption pertaining to the base of neither perception nor non-perception. The process of attainment is described in the canon thus: "By completely surmounting the base consisting of nothingness he enters and dwells in the base consisting of neither perception nor non-perception."[3]

Though the yogin, as the formula points out, attains the base of neither perception nor non-perception by passing beyond the base of nothingness, it still should be borne in mind that this fourth attainment has the third as its object. The yogin reached the fourth *āruppa* by focussing upon the base of nothingness as "peaceful, peaceful." In the Vibhaṅga it is said that the meditator who reaches the level that is neither percipient nor non-percipient "gives attention to that same base consisting of nothingness as peaceful."[4]

At this point the question may arise as to how the meditator can overcome the base of nothingness if he attends to it as peaceful. The *Visuddhimagga* answers that although the meditator gives attention to the third *āruppa* as peaceful, he has no desire to attain it,

---

1. PP., p. 364. Vism., p. 278.

2. PP., p. 265. "Saññā rogo, saññā gaṇḍo, saññā sallaṃ… etaṃ santaṃ, etaṃ panītaṃ yadidaṃ nevasaññā-nāsaññā ti." MN. 2:231.

3. PP., p. 365. "Sabbaso ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharatī ti." Vibh., p. 254.

4. PP., p. 366. "Taṃ yeva ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ santato manasikaroti. Vibh., p. 274.

since he has reflected upon the base of neither perception nor non-perception as more peaceful and superior. Buddhaghosa illustrates this with the example of a king who might see craftsmen at work while he is proceeding along a city street with the pomp of royalty. Though he might admire their skill and accomplishment in their crafts, the king would not want to become a craftsman himself, since he is aware of the superior benefits of kingship. Similarly,

> Though this [meditator] gives attention to that attainment as 'peaceful', yet there is no concern in him or reaction or attention such as 'I shall advert to this attainment' or 'I shall attain this' or 'I shall resolve upon [the duration of] it', or 'I shall emerge from it' or 'I shall review it'."[1]

The commentaries such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* and the *Visuddhimagga* go to great length to explain the meaning of the term "neither perception nor non-perception," which suggests the abstruse nature of this *jhāna*. The *jhāna* receives this name because on the one hand it lacks gross perception and on the other retains a subtle perception. Lacking gross perception, it cannot perform the decisive function of perception, i.e., the clear discernment of objects, and thus cannot be called "having perception" (*neva saññā*). But yet this attainment retains an extremely subtle perception as a residual formation, and thus cannot be called "without perception" (*nāsaññā*). To make plain this ambivalent character of the *jhāna* it is named "the base of neither perception nor non-perception." Perception is not the only mental factor that persists in this attainment in residual form; all the other mental factors such as feeling, consciousness, contact, and the rest also continue reduced to the finest subtlety. Thus this *jhāna* is also named "the attainment with residual formations" (*saṅkhārāvasesā samāpatti*). [2]

The commentaries illustrate the method of naming this attainment by means of the following anecdote. A novice smeared a bowl with oil and an elder monk asked him to bring the bowl to serve gruel. The novice replied, "Venerable sir, there is oil in the bowl." Then the monk told him, "Bring the oil, novice, I shall fill the oil tube." Thereupon the novice said: "There is no oil, Venerable sir."[3] In this tale what the novice said is true in both cases: there is no oil since there is not enough to fill the tube yet there is no utter absence of oil since some remains at the base of the bowl. Similarly, in this attainment perception cannot be said to be fully present since it is so subtle that it cannot perform the decisive function of perceiving an object; yet it cannot be said to be absent since it remains in residual form.

With this fourth formless *jhāna* the mind has reached the highest possible level of development in the direction of serenity (*samathabhāvanā*). Consciousness has attained to the most intense degree of concentration, becoming so subtle and so refined that it can no longer be described in terms of existence or non-existence. Yet even this

1. PP., p. 366. Vism., p. 280.

2. PP., p. 367. Vism., p. 280.

3. PP., pp. 367-68. Vism., p. 281.

attainment, as we will see, is still a mundane state which, from the Buddhist perspective, must finally give way to insight that alone leads to true liberation.

General Remarks on the Āruppas

Although the immaterial *jhānas*, unlike the fine material *jhānas*, are not given numerical names, they do follow a fixed sequence and must be attained in the order in which they are presented. That is, the yogin who wishes to achieve the immaterial *jhānas* must begin with the base of boundless space and then proceed step by step up to the base of neither perception nor non-perception. In this respect the accomplishment of the formless attainments corresponds to that of the lower four *jhānas*. However, an important difference separates the modes of progress in the two cases. In the case of the fine material *jhānas*, the ascent from one *jhāna* to another involves a surmounting of *jhāna* factors. To rise from the first *jhāna* to the second the yogin must eliminate applied thought and sustained thought, to rise from the second to the third he must overcome rapture, and to rise from the third to the fourth he must replace pleasant with neutral feeling. Thus progress involves a reduction and refinement of the *jhāna* factors, from the initial five to the culmination in mental one-pointedness and neutral feeling.

Once the fourth *jhāna* is reached the *jhāna* factors remain constant. In the higher ascent to the immaterial attainments there is no further elimination of *jhāna* factors. For this reason the formless *jhānas*, when classified from the perspective of their factorial constitution as is done in the Abhidhamma, are considered as modalities of the fourth *jhāna*. Thus the Dhammasaṅgaṇi presents the formula for the first immaterial attainment as follows:

> When the path to rebirth in the immaterial realm is cultivated, then with the entire surpassing of perceptions of material form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, by paying no attention to perceptions of variety, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and dwells in the fourth *jhāna* which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity and is associated with equanimity, associated with the perception of boundless space.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Similarly, the formulas for each of the other three immaterial attainments are conjoined with the formula for the fourth. All these *āruppas* are two-factored *jhānas*, constituted by mental one-pointedness and equanimous feeling.

Rather than being determined by a surmounting of factors, the order of the *āruppas* is determined by a surmounting of objects. Whereas for the lower *jhānas* the object can remain constant but the factors must be changed, for the immaterial *jhānas* the factors remain constant while the objects change. As we saw, the base of boundless space

1. "Yasmiṃ samaye arūpūpapattiyā maggaṃ bhāveti sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭighasaññānaṃ atthaṇgamānānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā ākāsānañcāyatanasaññāsahagataṃ sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassa domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā upekkhā satipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati upekkhāsahagataṃ." Dhs., p. 68.

eliminates the *kasiṇa* object of the fourth *jhāna*, the base of boundless consciousness surmounts the object of the base of boundless space, the base of nothingness surmounts the object of the base of boundless consciousness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception surmounts the object of the base of nothingness.

Because the objects become progressively more subtle at each level the *jhāna* factors of equanimous feeling and one-pointedness, while remaining constant in nature throughout, become correspondingly more refined in quality. Buddhaghosa illustrates this with two similes. The first compares the four formless *jhānas* to the floors of a four-storied palace with progressively finer objects of sense pleasure on each floor. There is no difference between the floors in regard to their nature as palace-floors, but only in regard to the objects of enjoyment found on them. The second simile compares the four formless *jhānas* to four pieces of cloth of the same measurements, yet made of thick, thin, thinner, and very thin thread respectively, all spun by the same person. Though there is no difference in their nature as pieces of cloth or in their measurements, yet they differ in their softness to the touch, fineness, and costliness. Similarly,

> although there are only the two factors in all four [immaterial states], that is to say, equanimity and unification of mind, still each one should be understood as finer than the one before with the progressive refinement of the factors due to successful development.[1]

Whereas the four lower *jhānas* can each take a variety of objects – the ten *kasiṇas*, the in-and-out breath, etc. – and do not stand in any integral relation to these objects, the four immaterial *jhānas* each take a single object which is so intimately related to the attainments that they interconnect in a closely knit manner. As we pointed out, the second *āruppa* takes as its object the consciousness pertaining to the first *āruppa*, the third the non-existence or disappearance of this same consciousness, and the fourth the four mental aggregates making up the third *āruppa*. Buddhaghosa illustrates this relation of successive dependence with another one of his picturesque analogies. A man arrived at a dirty place where a tent was set up, and being disgusted with the dirt, he hung on to the tent. Another man came along and leant upon the man hanging on to the tent. A third arrived, and thinking both were insecure, stood outside the tent. A fourth came, found the third man more securely placed, and leant upon him. The commentator connects the similes with the four *āruppas* thus:

> The space from which the *kasiṇa* has been removed is like the tent in the dirty place. The [consciousness of the] base consisting of boundless space, which makes space its object owing to disgust with the sign of the fine-material, is like the man who hangs on to the tent owing to disgust with the dirt. The [consciousness of the] base consisting of boundless consciousness, the occurrence of which is contingent upon [the consciousness of] the base consisting of boundless space whose object is space, is like the man who leans upon the man who hangs on to the tent. The [consciousness of the] base consisting of nothingness, which instead of making the [consciousness of the]

1. PP., pp. 369-70. Vism., p. 282.

> base consisting of boundless space its object has the non-existence of that as its object, is like the man who, after considering the insecurity of those two does not lean upon the one hanging on to the tent, but stands outside. The (consciousness of the] base consisting of neither perception nor non-perception, the occurrence of which is contingent upon [the consciousness of] the base consisting of nothingness, which stands in a place outside, in other words, in the non-existence of [the past] consciousness, is like the man who stands leaning upon the last-named, having considered the insecurity of the one hanging on to the tent and the one leaning upon him, and fancying that the one standing outside is well placed.[1]

Although the yogin who aspires to reach the base of neither perception nor-non-perception has seen the flaws in the base of nothingness, it is necessary for him to take this base as his object since there is no other object sufficiently subtle to serve as a foundation for reaching the highest formless attainment. This is similar to the case of men who remain loyal to a despotic king because they depend on him for their livelihood.[2] Thus it is evident that all eight attainments represent a gradual development, each succeeding one depending on its predecessor.

Although these four immaterial *jhānas* are separately described in the suttas they are not mentioned as often as the four fine material *jhānas*. The reason for this omission can be understood to be their implicit inclusion in the fourth *jhāna*. This inclusion is made because of their similarity of factors. Therefore, in places where the practices beyond the *jhānas* are discussed, the fourth *jhāna* alone is mentioned as their prerequisite since the *āruppas* are understood to be incorporated within it.

The Modes of Direct Knowledge

In the suttas the meditator who has attained and mastered the fourth *jhāna* is sometimes shown as proceeding to attain certain kinds of supernormal knowledge. In a stock passage it is said that when, after emerging from the fourth *jhāna*, the meditator's concentrated mind is "thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, and has become malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability,"[3] he directs it to the achievement of various powers of higher knowledge. These modes of higher knowledge are presented in different sets of varying number in the texts. Some suttas mention three, called the "threefold knowledge" (*tevijjā*). These are: [1] the knowledge of recollecting previous lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*); [2] the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*); and [3] the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).[4] Some suttas mention five kinds of direct knowledge

1. PP., pp. 370-71. Vism., p. 283.

2. PP., p. 371. Vism., p. 283.

3. PP., p. 409. "So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anangane vigatūpakkilese, mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñjappatte…" DN. 1:76.

4. AN. 1:163-65.

(*pañcābhiññā*): [1] the knowledge of the modes of supernormal power (*iddhividha-ñāṇa*); [2] the divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātuñāṇa*); [3] the knowledge of others' minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*); [4] the knowledge of recollecting previous lives; [5] the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings.[1] Other suttas expand this list to six (*chaḷabhiññā*) by adding the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers.[2] In this case the first five are called mundane modes of direct knowledge (*lokiya abhiññā*), the sixth the supramundane direct knowledge (*lokuttara abhiññā*). Still other suttas present a set of eight modes of higher knowledge. This set, which does not have a special name, consists of the above six *abhiññās* augmented by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana*) and the knowledge of the mind-created body (*manomayiddhiñāṇa*).[3] We will discuss these modes of higher knowledge in turn, taking the six *abhiññās* as the basis for our account and then adding explanations of the others. But first a few remarks are called for on the preliminaries for the modes of direct knowledge.

The Prerequisites for Direct Knowledge

In order to develop the five mundane *abhiññās*, as well as the knowledge of the mind-created body, it is necessary to have gained proficiency in the eight meditative attainments (*aṭṭhasamāpattiyo*) comprising the four fine material *jhānas* and the four immaterial *jhānas*. Although the suttas often show the exercise of the *abhiññās* taking place immediately after the fourth *jhāna*, without mentioning the formless attainments, the commentaries state that the latter also have to be understood as their prerequisites. The reason they are not mentioned is that they are implicitly included by the fourth *jhāna*, which alone serves as the immediate basis for the exercise of the *abhiññās*.

Thus the commentary to the Dīgha Nikāya states:

> There is no achievement of the higher kinds of direct knowledge without accomplishing mastery over the eight meditative attainments in the fourteen ways [to be explained]. In the texts only the fine material *jhānas* are given; however the immaterial *jhānas* should be included and explained.[4] (Wr. tr.).

The subcommentary to this passage elaborates the point further:

> When it is said that this method (of attaining direct knowledge) does not succeed without the immaterial attainments, their indispensability should be understood. If so, then why aren't the immaterial *jhānas* mentioned in the text? Specifically, since the fourth fine-material *jhāna* is the basis for all the *abhiññās*, they are taught by being included within that (*jhāna*). It is not that

1. SN. 2:216.

2. DN. 3:281.

3. *Ibid.* 1:76-77.

4. "Ettāvatā cesa rūpajjhānalābhiyo na arūpajjhānalābhiti na veditabbo. Na hi aṭṭhasu samāpattīsu cuddasahākārehi ciṇṇavasibhāvaṃ vinā upari abhiññādhigamo hoti. Pāliyaṃ pana rūpajjhānāniyeva āgatāni. Arūpajjhānāni āharitvā kathetabbāni." DN.A. 1:196.

the immaterial *jhānas* are not instrumental here. Hence (the commentary) says: 'the immaterial *jhānas* should be included and explained'.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The *Sāratthadīpanī*, a Vinaya subcommentary, states the same point more succinctly: "'Four *jhānas*' is said because the four imaterial *jhānas* attained by the elimination of desire for the fine material *jhānas* are included in the fourth *jhāna*."[2] (Wr. tr.).

All this means that mastery of the four fine material *jhānas*, without mastering the *āruppas*, is not sufficient for achieving the mundane *abhiññās*. To attain the mundane kinds of direct knowledge the formless *jhānas* also must be mastered, and therefore when the fourth *jhāna* is shown as preceding the *abhiññās* the prior acquisition of the *āruppas* should be understood. It should be mentioned, however, that the mundane *jhānas* and the exercises based on them are not requirements for the sixth, supramundane *abhiññā*. This latter is the outcome of wisdom rather than of absorption, as we will see below.

For the meditator to achieve the *abhiññās* he should accomplish the eight attainments in each of the eight *kasiṇas*, the four elemental *kasiṇas* (earth, water, fire, and air) and the four color *kasiṇas* (blue, yellow, red, and white). Then he should acquire complete control of his mind in the following fourteen ways:[3]

[1] The meditator must attain *jhāna* in the eight *kasiṇas* in the direct order given in the texts (*kasiṇānuloma*), i.e., from the earth *kasiṇa* through to the white *kasiṇa*, doing so even up to a thousand times in each one until he is fully adept at it. [2] Having mastered the direct order, the yogin should attain *jhāna* in the *kasiṇas* in reverse order (*kasiṇāpaṭiloma*), moving from the white *kasiṇa* back to the earth *kasiṇa*. [3] He should next attain *jhāna* again and again in forward and reverse order (*kasiṇānulomapaṭiloma*) from the earth *kasiṇa* to the white *kasiṇa* and then back again.

[4] The yogin should attain each of the attainments in direct order from the first *jhāna* up to the base of neither perception nor non-perception (*jhānānuloma*). [5] Then he should master the *jhānas* in reverse order (*jhānāpaṭiloma*), from the eight down to the first. And next [6] he moves through the *jhānas* in both direct and reverse order (*jhānānulomapaṭiloma*).

[7] The meditator should skip alternate *jhānas* (*jhānukkantika*) while retaining the same *kasiṇa*. That is, with the earth *kasiṇa* as object, he should attain the first *jhāna*, third *jhāna*, the base of boundless space, and the base of nothingness, then repeat the same for the water *kasiṇa*, etc. [8] Then he should skip alternate *kasiṇas* (*kasiṇukkantika*) without

---

1. "Svāyaṃ nayo arūpasamāpattīhi vinā na ijjhatīti tāyapettha avinābhāvo veditabbo. Yadi evaṃ kasmā pāliyaṃ na arūpajjhānāni āgatāni? Visesato ca rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānapādakattā sabbābhiññānaṃ tadantogadhā katvā tayā desitā; na arūpāvacarajjhānaṃ idha anupayogato; tenāha: 'Arūpajjhānaṃ āharitvā kathetabbāni Ñāṇābhivaṃsa, [*Dīgha Nikāya Abhinava Ṭīkā*] *Sādhuvilāsinī Nāma Sīlakkhandhavagga Abhinavaṭīkā*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961), 2:142.

2. "Rūpa virāga bhāvanā vasena pavattaṃ catubbhidhampi arūpajjhānaṃ catutthajjhānasaṅgahamevāti āha 'cattāri jhānāniti'" Sāriputta Thera, [*Samantapāsādikā Vinayaṭṭhakathā Ṭīkā*] *Sāratthadīpanīṭīkā*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960), 1:380.

3. PP., pp. 410-11. Vism., pp. 314-15.

skipping *jhānas*; he attains the first *jhāna* in the earth, fire, blue, and red *kasiṇas*, then repeats the same for each of the other *jhānas*. [9] The meditator next proceeds to skipping *jhānas* and *kasiṇas* together (*jhānakasiṇukkantika*). He should attain the first *jhāna* in the earth *kasiṇa*, the third in the fire *kasiṇa*, the base of boundless space by removing the blue *kasiṇa*, and the base of nothingness arrived at through the red *kasiṇa*.

[l0] The next stage, called "transposition of factors", (*aṅgasaṅkantika*) involves attaining the first *jhāna* up to the fourth *āruppa* all in the same *kasiṇa*. [11] He then attains the first *jhāna* in each of the *kasiṇas* from the earth *kasiṇa* through the white *kasiṇa*. This is called "transposition of objects" (*ārammaṇasankantika*). [12] The combined "transposition of factors and objects" (*aṅgārammaṇasankantika*) involves changing the *jhānas* and objects in matched correspondence to each other, that is, attaining the first *jhāna* in the earth *kasiṇa*, the second in the water *kasiṇa*, the third in the fire *kasiṇa*, and so forth up to the base of neither perception nor non-perception arrived at from the white *kasiṇa*.

[13] The "definition of factors" (*aṅgavavatthāpana*) means defining each of the *jhānas* from the first to the eighth by way of its constituent factors, the first as five-factored, the second as three-factored, etc. [14] The definition of object (*ārammaṇavavatthāpana*) means defining only the object, as "This is the earth *kasina*", etc., up to "This is the white *kasiṇa*."

After mastering these fourteen modes the meditator should develop the four bases of accomplishment, that is zeal (*chanda*), consciousness (*citta*), energy (*viriya*), and inquiry (*vīmaṃsā*).[1] He should cultivate these intensively in order to attain the desired type of direct knowledge. Having fulfilled all the preliminary conditions, the meditator must direct his mind to the kind of supernormal knowledge he wishes to attain. The *abhiññās* do not come as automatic by-products of *jhāna* but require a prior resolution and determinate effort on the part of the yogin. As the Buddha says, when the meditator's mind is concentrated and purified "he directs, he inclines his mind to the kinds of supernormal power."[2]

The Six Abhiññās

1. Knowledge of the modes of supernormal power (iddhividhañāṇa)

The Pāli word *iddhi*, which we translate as "supernormal power", comes from the Sanskrit root *ṛddh*, which means to prosper or to succeed. *Iddhi* thus means, literally, prosperity, success, or accomplishment, but the main sense suggested by the word is an ability to perform feats which go against the normal course of natural events. For this reason the *iddhis* have sometimes been interpreted as supernatural or miraculous powers. However, from the Buddhist standpoint these powers do not derive from any divine or supernatural source but from a psychic potency based upon a superior understanding of the inner dynamics of nature. Thus they operate completely within the framework of the

1. PP., pp. 421-22. Vism., p. 324.

2. PP., p. 414. "Iddhividhāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhinnāmeti." DN. 1:77-78.

law of cause and effect and the "miracles" for which they are responsible remain entirely natural.

The kinds of supernormal power exercised by a meditator are described in the texts in the following stock passage;

> When his concentrated mind is thus purified… and attained to imperturbability, he directs, he inclines his mind to the kinds of supernormal power. He wields the various kinds of supernormal power. Having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one. He appears and vanishes. He goes unhindered through walls, through enclosures, through mountains, as though in open space. He dives in and out of the earth as though in water. He goes on unbroken water as though on earth. Seated cross-legged he travels in space like a winged bird. With his hand he touches and strokes the moon and sun so mighty and powerful. He wields bodily mastery even as far as the Brahmā world.[1]

In this passage eight supernormal powers are expounded. We will examine them briefly one by one.

[1] The first supernormal power is becoming many after having been one or becoming one after having been many (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti*, *bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti*). This means the ability to create many appearances or forms of oneself and then to dissolve those many forms and return to the condition of having a single body. To exercise this power the meditator should enter the fourth *jhāna* as a basis for direct knowledge and emerge from it. Then he must resolve on the number of forms of himself he wishes to create. He again attains the fourth *jhāna*, emerges, and resolves. Simultaneously with the resolving consciousness he becomes the number of forms he decided upon – a hundred, a thousand, etc., as he wishes, (presumably in most cases the ability to create an increasing number of forms must be gradually acquired). Unless a specific determination is made otherwise, the many created forms will appear just like the original and perform the same actions he performs. But if the yogin makes a prior resolution, he can display his many forms with different appearances and cause them to perform different actions. To become one again he should repeat the original procedure, resolving to become one. But if he originally resolved to appear as many for a limited time, the many forms will disappear automatically when the time lapses.[2]

[2] The second power is causing appearance and disappearance (*āvībhāvatirobhāvaṃ*). "Causing appearance" means making a dark area appear light, making what is hidden become visible, or making oneself or others become visible even when at a distance. "Causing disappearance" means making a bright area appear dark, making what is manifest become invisible, or making oneself or others become invisible even when within range of sight. The procedure is the same as in the case of the previous power except that the resolution is changed.

---

1. PP., pp. 409, 420. Vism., pp. 315, 323. DN. 1:77.

2. PP., pp. 420-27. Vism., pp. 323-28.

[3] To exercise the power of going through walls, enclosures, and mountains as though through space (*tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ*) the yogin should attain the fourth *jhāna* in the space *kasiṇa*. Then he does the preliminary work by adverting to the wall, enclosure or mountain, etc. and resolving upon it as space. As a result of his resolution it becomes space and he passes through it unhindered.

[4] In order to acquire the ability to dive in and out of the ground as if it were water (*paṭhaviyā pi ummujja nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake*) the yogin must have obtained the water *kasiṇa* attainment. He enters into the fourth *jhāna* on the water *kasiṇa* and emerges. Then he adverts to a portion of ground and resolves upon it thus "Let there be water." The earth becomes water and he can dive in it, bathe in it, drink it, etc. If he resolves only this much the earth becomes water for him alone, but if he makes a determination it can become water for others as well.

[5] The yogin who wishes to walk on water without sinking as though it were earth (*udake pi abhijjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭha-viyaṃ*) should be skilled in the earth *kasiṇa*. He enters the fourth *jhāna* on the earth *kasiṇa*, emerges, and resolves "Let the water become earth." He repeats the procedure, and with the resolution the water in the determined area becomes earth. Then he can walk on it without falling in.

[6] To travel through space like a bird (*ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo*), the yogin obtains the earth *kasiṇa* and emerges. He determines upon space as being earth, thinking "Let there be earth." For him space becomes solid like the earth, and he can walk, stand, sit, or lie down there just as men normally can do on the ground.

[7] The next power, touching and stroking the sun and moon with one's hand (*ime pi candima-suriyā evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasati parimajjati*), does not require a special kasiṇa, but is accomplished simply through the fourth *jhāna* that is made a basis for direct knowledge. The Paṭisambhidāmagga describes this power thus:

> Here he who has controlled his mind and has attained psychic powers, contemplates on the sun and moon… resolves through super knowledge: 'Let them come to the side of my hand' and they appear. Seated or lying down he handles, feels, touches, the sun and moon with his hand.[1]

The meditator, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, can either go to the sun and moon and touch them, or make them come into hand's reach by a mental resolution, doing so by enlarging his hand.[2] But though he does all this, for others the sun and moon remain the same, their radiance and movement being unaffected.

[8] The last of the powers is exercising bodily mastery as far as the Brahma-world (*yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena vā saṃvatteti*). Having attained the basic *jhāna*, the meditator who wants to go to the Brahma-world can resolve upon it as near and it becomes as he

1. BMTP., p. 436. "Idha so iddhimā ceto vasippatto… candimasuriye āvajjati āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti 'hatthapāse hotūti'. So nisinnako vā nipannako vā candimasuriye pāṇinā āmasati parāmasati parimajjati." Pts., p. 387.

2. PP., p. 435. Vism., p. 335.

wishes. He can make the near become distant, the many become few, and the few become many. The Paṭisambhidāmagga describes some of the masteries the yogin can exercise thus:

> If he, who is possessed of psychic power, and has controlled his will wishes to go to the Brahma-world, he resolves that the distant be near, and it becomes near; he resolves that the near be distant, and it becomes distant; he resolves that the many be few, and they become few; he resolves that the few be many, and they become many. With the divine-sight he sees the Brahma's form; with the divine-hearing element he hears the Brahma's voice; with the knowledge of others' minds he knows the Brahma's mind. If he wishes to go to the Brahma-world in this visible body, he applies his *jhāna*-mind to the physical body, he resolves concerning the mind as the body; having applied the mind to the body, he enters into the thought of ease and lightness, and in his visible body he goes to the Brahma-world. If he… wishes to go to the Brahma-world in an invisible body, he applies his body to the mind, he resolves the body as the mind… he enters into the thought of ease and lightness and in an invisible body goes to the Brahma-world. In the presence of Brahma he creates a mind-formed body… He walks to and fro, the created body walks also to and fro. If he stands… sits… lies down, the created body also… lies down. If he emits vapour… flames… speaks… whatever he does, so does the created body.[1]

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, "applying the *jhāna*-mind to the physical body" and "resolving upon the mind as the body" means making the mind accord with the material body. When the yogin enters into the "thought of ease and lightness" his physical body becomes as light as a tuft of cotton, and he can go to the Brahma-world with a visible body as light as a tuft of cotton wafted by the wind. On the other hand "applying the body to the mind" and "resolving the body as the mind" mean taking the body and mounting it on the mind, so as to make its mode of going swift like that of the mind. All these practices form the preliminary exercise for reaching the Brahma-world, but do not yet constitute the "wielding of bodily mastery as far as the Brahma-world." The wielding of bodily power begins, in the above passage, with the creation of a mind-formed body in the presence of Brahma, continuing through the feats that follow this down to "whatever he does, so does the created body."[2]

Iddhi and Pāṭihāriya

The possession of *iddhi* is regarded as a desirable quality in a bhikkhu which contributes to the completeness of his spiritual perfection.[3] However, exhibiting supernormal powers to gain adherents, win offerings, or obtain popularity has been prohibited by the Buddha. In the Vinaya the display of supernormal feats or psychic powers is classified as

1. BMTP., pp. 437-38. Pts. pp. 387-88.

2. PP., pp. 441-43. Vism., pp. 331-32.

3. AN. 3:280-81.

an offense of wrong doing (*āpatti-dukkaṭa*).[1] Nevertheless, while the Buddha rebuked Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja for exhibiting his powers to obtain a sandalwood bowl, he expressed approval of Moggallāna's exercise of *iddhis*.[2] The reason for this difference is that the former made an indiscreet public exhibition of his power while the latter used his powers judiciously. The Buddha approved of the exhibition of psychic power only when it helps eliminate the defilements in peoples' minds and makes them free from obsessions.

Sometimes the word *iddhi* appears in combination with another word *pāṭihāriya*, which means literally "prevention" or "warding off" but assumes the sense of "wonder" or "marvel"; the compound *iddhipāṭihāriya* thus signifies the "wonder of supernormal powers." The term appears in the suttas in a triad of *pāṭihāriyas* comprising the following items: [1] the wonder of supernormal powers (*iddhipāṭihāriya*); [2] the wonder of manifestation or thought-reading (*ādesanapāṭihāriya*); and [3] the wonder of education (*anusāsanīpāṭihāriya*).[3] The first is explained simply by the stock passage on the supernormal powers. The wonder of manifestation involves telling people what their mental states are on the basis of thought-reading, interpretation, or messages received from other beings, human or non-human.[4] The wonder of education is the ability to guide others in their spiritual development, telling them: "You should think these thoughts, you should not think those thoughts; you should attend in this way, not in that way; you should abandon this; you should enter and abide thus."[5] Those who impart this education know exactly what to urge their pupils to avoid and what to urge them to develop.

Of the three types of *pāṭihāriya*, the Buddha disapproved of the use of the first two as means of converting people to his teaching. He said that there are certain magical sciences (*vijjā*) which can enable a person to perform supernormal feats or practice thought reading and thus these wonders cannot be taken as indicators of real spiritual accomplishment.[6] The wonder to which he gave unqualified approval was the wonder of education, which alone leads to liberation from suffering.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga, elaborating this idea, states that the wonderful methods which promote renunciation, non-hatred, mental luminosity, composure of mind, determination of righteousness, wisdom, bliss, the attainment of the *jhānas*, etc., up to the path of arahatship are called the true *iddhi* as they bring real accomplishment and success. The methods that destroy sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, doubt, ignorance, clinging, the hindrances and defilements are called the real *pāṭihāriya* for the reason that they prevent one from falling back into *saṃsāra*.[7] Thus for early

1. Vinp. 2:112.

2. SN. 4:269.

3. DN. 1:212-15. Pts., pp. 401-404.

4. Pts., p. 402.

5. DN. 1:214-15.

6. *Ibid.* 1:213-14.

7. Pts., pp. 401-404.

Buddhism the practice of the noble path rather than performance of miracles constitutes the truly wonderful accomplishment.

2. The second abhiññā: the divine ear-element (dibbasotadhatu)

The divine ear-element is the ability to hear the sounds of deities as well as of human beings, and to hear sounds that are far off, even in another world system, as well as sounds that are extremely near, such as the sounds of the creatures living in one's own body.[1] The texts describe the divine ear-element as follows:

> He directs, he inclines, his mind to the divine ear-element. With the divine ear-element, which is purified and surpasses the human, he hears both kinds of sounds, the divine and the human, those that are far as well as near.[2]

Technically, the divine ear-element refers to a particular capacity for knowledge, called an "ear-element" for the reason that it exercises the function of the normal ear, namely, acting as a basis for the hearing of sounds. This element is said to be "divine" because it is similar to the ear-element of the deities, which is liberated from imperfections and capable of receiving far-off sounds.[3]

To obtain the divine ear-element the meditator should attain the basic *jhāna* for direct-knowledge and then emerge from it. Keeping his mind at the level of preliminary-work concentration, he should advert first to gross sounds within the normal range of hearing, then gradually to more and more subtle sounds until he can hear the faintest sounds that can only be heard with the most careful attention. He should concentrate on each of the ten directions, attending to the precise "signs" or qualities of the sounds being heard.

When he concentrates his mind on these sounds with an earnest desire to gain the divine ear-element, in time a mind-door adverting consciousness will arise taking one of these sounds for its object. This will be followed by three or four *javanas* of the preliminary or access stage, and a fourth or fifth of the absorption level belonging to the fourth *jhāna*. The faculty of knowledge arisen in association with this absorption consciousness is called the divine ear-element.

If the yogin wishes to hear distant sounds he should begin by delimiting a small area, master the ability to hear the sounds in that area, and then extend the range of his hearing outward by degrees. As his ability improves he can hear distinctly all the sounds on earth and in the other planes of existence within a world system and even further. Moreover, if he wants to, he can define each sound separately, even when it is merged with other sounds.

---

1. PP., pp. 446-47. Vism., p. 343.

2. PP., p. 446. "… dibbāya sota-dhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So dibbāya sotadhātuyā visuddhāya atikkanta-mānusikāya ubho sadde suṇāti, dibbe ca mānuse ca, ye dūre santike ca." DN. 1:79.

3. PP., p. 446. Vism., p. 343.

3. The third abhiññā: the knowledge of others' minds (cetopariya ñāṇa paracittavijānana)

The third *abhiññā* is the knowledge of others' minds, the ability to penetrate with one's own mind the mental states of others. The Buddha describes this *abhiññā* as follows:

> With his mind thus concentrated… he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of the state of others' minds. Discriminating with his mind he understands the state of others' minds: that of a mind with passion he understands that it is with passion, of one free from passion that it is free from passion… with hatred… free from hatred… with delusion… free from delusion… that which is composed… distracted… grown great (having attained to the *rūpa* and the *arūpa jhānas*)… not grown great… mean… lofty… concentrated… not concentrated… emancipated… not emancipated. Thus he knows the state of others' minds.[1]

According to the explanation in the *Visuddhimagga*, a meditator who aspires to this knowledge must first have attained the divine eye, the faculty of supernormal vision (to be explained below). He should use the light-*kasiṇa* to extend light, radiating it into the physical hearts of the people whose minds he wishes to understand. With his divine eye he should then examine the color of the heart, on the basis of which he can interpret the state of mind. The procedure is based on the belief that there is an immediate correspondence between the color of the blood and the state of consciousness. According to Buddhaghosa, when a joyous state of mind is present the blood is red like banyan fruit, when a state accompanied by grief is present the blood is black like rose-apple fruit, and when a state accompanied by serenity is present the blood is clear like sesamum oil.[2] Thus by perceiving with the divine eye the color of the blood the yogin can know the quality of a person's consciousness. However, Buddhaghosa does not mention the correspondence between blood-color and states of mind accompanied by greed, hatred, delusion, and their opposites, as given in the sutta.

Once the meditator gains familiarity with reading minds on the basis of the blood color, he can learn to penetrate the minds of others directly, without having to rely on a physical basis for making inferences. It should be pointed out, however, that a meditator possessing this faculty of knowledge still cannot penetrate the minds of those on a higher level of attainment than his own. Thus a worldling with mundane direct knowledge cannot penetrate the mind of an ariyan and know how the latter is free from certain defilements. Similarly, a stream-enterer cannot penetrate the mind of a once-

---

1. BMTP., pp. 445-46. "So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgane vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte ceto pariyañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So parasattānaṃ parapuggalānaṃ cetasā ceto paricca pajānāti – sarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ sarāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vītarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta rāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, sadosaṃ… sadosaṃ…, vīta dosaṃ… vītadosaṃ…, samohaṃ… samohaṃ…, saṃkhittaṃ vā… saṃkhittaṃ…, vikkhittaṃ vā… vikkhittaṃ…, mahaggataṃ vā… mahaggataṃ…, amahaggataṃ vā… amahaggataṃ…, sa-uttaraṃ vā… sa-uttaraṃ…, anuttaraṃ vā… anuttaraṃ…, samāhitaṃ… samāhitaṃ…, asamāhitaṃ vā… asamāhitaṃ…, vimuttaṃ vā cittaṃ vimuttaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, avimuttaṃ vā cittaṃ avimuttaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti." DN. 1:79-80

2. PP., p. 449. Vism., pp. 344-45.

returner, a once-returner the mind of a non-returner, a non-returner the mind of an arahant, or an arahant the mind of a *paccekabuddha* or fully enlightened Buddha. The converse, however, is possible: one on a higher plane, if he has the faculty of penetrating others' minds, can know the minds of those on a lower plane.[1]

4. The fourth abhiññā: the knowledge of recollecting previous lives (pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa)

The knowledge of recollecting previous lives is explained in the suttas as follows:

> With his mind thus concentrated… he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of recollecting previous existences. He recollects various kinds of former lives, such as one birth, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand births, many cycles of evolution of the universe, of dissolution, and of evolution and dissolution. 'In that one I had such a name, clan, caste, such sustenance, experiencing such pleasure and pain, and having such an end of life. Passing away thence I was reborn in such a place. There too I had such a name, clan… and such an end of life. Passing away thence I was reborn here'. Thus he remembers various kinds of his former lives with their modes and details.[2]

According to the word explanation of the name for this *abhiññā*, "previous lives" means the mental and physical aggregates experienced in one's own personal continuum in former births. "Recollection" (*anussati*), is the memory by which one recollects past existences, and the *abhiññā* itself is the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) arising out of that memory.[3] The *Visuddhimagga* teaches that there are six classes of men who possess this knowledge – other sectarians, ordinary disciples of the Buddha, the great disciples, the chief disciples, *paccekabuddhas*, and fully enlightened Buddhas. The range of recollection belonging to these persons is proportional to their spiritual stature: sectarians can recollect only as far back as forty aeons (*kappa*), ordinary disciples as far as a thousand aeons, the eighty great disciples as far as a hundred thousand aeons, the two chief disciples as far as an incalculable (*asaṅkheyya*) and a hundred thousand aeons, and *paccekabuddhas* as far as two incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons. For the fully enlightened Buddhas there is no limit to their capacity for recollection, which excels in speed and clarity as well.[4]

A meditator who wishes to cultivate this knowledge should attain the fourth *jhāna* as a basis for direct knowledge and then emerge from it. Having emerged he should start recalling his most recent activities in as precise detail as possible. Then he should go back in time by periods of the day, watches of the night, days and nights, etc. If he cannot recollect something he should attain the basic *jhāna*, emerge, and advert. The

1. PP., p. 473. Vism., p. 364.

2. BMTP., pp. 447-48. DN. 1:81.

3. PP., p. 451. Vism., p. 346.

4. PP., p. 452. Vism. p. 346.

experience of the *jhāna* clears away the obstructions to memory so that the apparently lost events become as evident as when a lamp is lit. Beginning with moments, he should go back in increasingly larger units – days, months, years, and so on – until he arrives at the moment of rebirth in the present existence. At this point he should advert to the mind and body at the moment of death in his preceding existence. If he cannot recall his past life at once due to the separation between lives he should not give up the task, but should attain the basic *jhāna*, emerge, and advert again and again if necessary.

When his ability has matured there will arise in him a mind-door adverting consciousness making its object the mind-body compound existing at the death-moment of his previous life. This will be followed by four or five impulsions (*javanas*) with the same object, the last of which is an absorption consciousness of the fourth *jhāna*. The knowledge associated with that consciousness is the knowledge of recollecting previous lives. Then beginning with the recollection of a single past life, the meditator should repeat the procedure with more and more past lives, until he can recall in detail his past experiences in entire aeons on end.[1] The Buddha compares this knowledge to the memory of a man who travels from village to village: while staying in one village he can recall the number of villages he has already visited, what he did in each village, and all the details of his experience in each village.[2]

5. The fifth abhiññā: the divine eye (dibbacakkhu) – the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (cutūpapātañāṇa)

The text describing this *abhiññā* reads:

> With his mind thus concentrated… he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings. With his divine vision, purified and surpassing human sight, he sees beings passing away and being reborn again, low or high, of good or bad appearance, in happy or miserable existences, according to their karma. He fully realizes that those beings who are revilers of the noble ones, who are of false views, who acquire the karma of their false views, at the dissolution of the body after death have been reborn in a miserable existence, in hell. But those beings who are given to good conduct in deed, word and thought, who are not revilers of the noble ones, who are of right views, who acquire the karma of their right views, at the dissolution of the body after death have been reborn in a happy existence, in the world of heaven.[3]

The knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings is acquired by means of the divine eye, a supernormal faculty of vision called "divine" because it is similar to the vision of the deities in its ability to perceive objects at remote distances and to see objects hidden behind walls, etc. This vision is also said to be "purified" because by bringing both death and rebirth into range, it contributes to the purification of

1. PP., pp. 453-55. Vism., pp. 347-49.

2. DN. 1:81-82.

3. BMTP., p. 451. DN. 1:82.

understanding. One who sees only passing away but not rebirth generally inclines to the annihilationist view that a being is extinguished at death; one who sees only birth but not the previous passing away generally inclines to the view that a new being arises. But one who sees both can acquire the purified view of rebirth according to *kamma*, thus abandoning these defiled views. The *Visuddhimagga* points out that one with the divine eye cannot see death and rebirth at the precise moments of their occurrence, due to the brevity and extreme subtlety of these events. What he sees are beings on the verge of death who will now die, and then those who have taken rebirth and have just re-appeared.[1]

The commentaries recommend three *kasiṇas* as the object for developing this knowledge – namely, the fire *kasiṇa*, white *kasiṇa*, or light *kasiṇa*; of the three, the light *kasiṇa* is said to be the most effective. After emerging from the basic *jhāna*, the meditator should focus on one of these *kasiṇas*, stopping at the level of access concentration. He should not enter absorption since if he does he will not be able to perform the preliminary work for the direct-knowledge. At the level of access the meditator should extend the *kasiṇa* image over a predetermined area, so that its light illuminates the area and visible forms within its space come into range of his vision. If the light disappears he should again enter the basic *jhāna*, emerge, and pervade the area with light. As time goes on he develops the ability to pervade any area with light and remain watching the visible forms there for a whole day. When visible forms that are not perceptible to the ordinary fleshly eye such as objects inside the body, objects hidden behind walls, objects in other planes of existence or in other world systems – come into the focus of the meditator's eye of knowledge and are seen directly, then the divine eye has arisen. To make this divine eye the instrument for perceiving the passing away and rebirth of beings, the meditator should apply his divine vision to this object until it comes into view.

The *Visuddhimagga* says that the divine eye, or knowledge of passing away and re-arising, has two accessory kinds of knowledge, namely, knowledge of the future (*anāgataṃsa ñāṇa*), and knowledge of faring according to *kamma* (*yathākammūpaga-ñāṇa*).[2] The former is the ability to foresee where a being will be reborn in the future and to foresee the course of future events. The latter is the ability to discern the *kamma* of the past that brought a being to a particular destiny in the present. Though these two types of knowledge are made possible by the divine eye, they differ from the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings in that this last *abhiññā* has the present as its objective range while the other two have as their objective range the future and the past respectively. By counting these modes of direct knowledge separately, the number of mundane *abhiññās* possible for a meditator is totaled at seven. But when they are included within the divine eye, the number is given as five.

1. PP., pp. 465-66. Vism., p. 358.

2. PP., pp. 471, 477-78. Vism., pp. 363, 367-68.

6. The sixth abhiññā: the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers (āsavakkhayañāṇa)

The sixth direct-knowledge available to a meditator is the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers. The "cankers" are called in Pāli *āsavas*, meaning literally that which flows out; thus the word is sometimes translated "outflows." The term signifies certain fundamental defilements which "flow out" from the mind, causing spiritual corruption and sustaining the process of *saṃsāra*. In the earliest texts the *āsavas* are usually given as three in number: the canker of sensual desire (*kāmāsava*), the canker of (craving for) existence (*bhavāsava*), and the canker of ignorance (*avijjāsava*). Other texts, particularly those of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, add a fourth, the canker of wrong views (*diṭṭhāsava*).[1]

The meditator's attainment of the destruction of the cankers is described in the suttas in the following passage:

> With his mind thus concentrated… he applies, he directs his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers. He knows suffering as it is; he knows the origin of suffering as it is; he knows the cessation of suffering as it is; he knows the path leading to the cessation of suffering as it is. He knows the cankers as they are; he knows the origin of the cankers as it is; he knows the cessation of the cankers as it is; he knows the path leading to the cessation of cankers as it is. The mind of him who knows thus is liberated from the canker of sensual desire, from the canker of existence, and from the canker of ignorance. In him who is liberated the knowledge arises that he is liberated. He understands: 'Rebirth is destroyed; the noble life has been lived; what was to be done has been done; nothing else remains to be done henceforth'.[2] (Wr. tr.).

According to the commentary, in this passage the destruction of the cankers can signify either *nibbāna* or the fourth supramundane path, the path of arahatship.[3] *Nibbāna* is called the destruction of the cankers because it is the state wherein the cankers are utterly destroyed; the path of arahatship is called thus because it brings about the destruction of the cankers. The "knowledge of the destruction of the cankers" is the faculty of knowledge contained in the consciousness belonging to the path of arahatship. As the stock description makes clear, the content of this knowledge is the Four Noble Truths. By knowing and seeing for himself with direct perception the Four Noble Truths in their full depth and range, the meditator eradicates the mental corruptions and attains

---

1. Dhs., p. 221.

2. "So evaṃ samāhite citte… āsavānaṃ khaya-ñāṇāya cittaṃ abbhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So 'idaṃ dukkhan'ti yatthābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo'ti yatthābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho'ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā'ti yathā bhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ime āsavā' ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ayaṃ āsavasamudayo'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ayaṃ āsavanirodho'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'ayaṃ āsavanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Tassa evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato kāmāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati bhavāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati avijjāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati, 'vimuttasmim vimuttaṃ' ti ñāṇaṃ hoti, 'khīnā jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ nāparaṃ itthattāyā'ti pajānāti." DN. 1:83-84.

3. DN.A. 1:200-201.

complete emancipation. As this realization results from insight, we will discuss it more fully in the next chapter, in connection with the supramundane paths.

For the present two observations should be made concerning the sixth *abhiññā*. First, we should note that though the texts often show the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers as following the fourth *jhāna*, the latter is not indispensable for its attainment. The realization of the Four Noble Truths can arise with any *jhāna* as its basis, and it is even recognized that some meditators can achieve the liberating knowledge without any previous experience in the mundane *jhānas*, solely by the power of their faculty of wisdom. What is required in all cases for the attainment of the noble paths is the development of insight (*vipassanābhāvanā*), which can be either based upon some prior attainment in *jhānic* concentration or proceed in a "dry" manner based solely upon the momentary concentration connected with mindful observation of phenomena. In this respect the sixth *abhiññā* differs from the other five, which all presuppose proficiency in the eight attainments belonging to absorption-concentration.

For this reason the sixth *abhiññā* differs from the other five in a second respect, namely, that it is regarded as an acquisition exclusive to the Buddha's dispensation. The other five *abhiññās* are all mundane, being based solely upon the development of concentration, since the methods of developing concentration are available in non-Buddhist disciplines, those who follow these disciplines and achieve sufficient power of concentration can also acquire the five mundane *abhiññās*. However, the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers is a supramundane attainment which arises out of insight into the nature of phenomena. Hence it can only be gained by Buddhas, *paccekabuddhas*, and arahant disciples. In the case of the Buddhas and *paccekabuddhas* it arises out of their own self-evolved wisdom (*sayaṃbhūñāṇa*); in the case of disciples it arises by practising insight meditation in accordance with the instructions received from a Buddha or from teachers who transmit his dispensation.

Because of these differences between the sixth *abhiññā* and the others, the *abhiññās* are collected together into two groups, overlapping, but distinct. On the one hand there is the five *abhiññās*, comprising the five kinds of mundane direct-knowledge; on the other there is the six *abhiññās*, comprising the five mundane forms of direct-knowledge together with the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers. While the mundane *abhiññās* are regarded as ornaments of a yogin within the Buddha's dispensation, the sixth *abhiññā* is regarded as its vital essence, the supreme goal of the entire practice of meditation.

Other Kinds of Supernormal Knowledge

In addition to the six *abhiññās*, certain suttas mention two other kinds of superior knowledge following the fourth *jhāna*. These are called "knowledge and vision" (*ñāṇadassana*) and "the knowledge of the mind-created body" (*manomaya iddhi ñāṇa*). In the texts they immediately precede the six *abhiññās*, though the eight are not collected together into a single group with a collective name.[1]

1. DN. 1:76-77. MN. 2:17-18.

The textual description of "knowledge and vision" is as follows:

> With his heart thus serene…, he applies and bends down his mind to that insight that comes from knowledge [knowledge and vision]. He grasps the fact: 'This body of mine has form, it is built up of the four elements, it springs from father and mother, it is continually renewed by so much boiled rice and juicy foods, its very nature is impermanence, it is subject to erosion, abrasion, dissolution, and disintegration; and therein is this consciousness of mine, too, bound up, on that does it depend.[1]

According to the commentary, "knowledge and vision" in this passage signifies the knowledge arising through insight (*vipassanāñāṇa*).[2] After emerging from the fourth *jhāna*, the yogin directs his attention to his body and mind. He first discerns the body, and sees it as material, compounded, dependently arisen, impermanent, subject to destruction. He then directs his attention to the mind, and sees the mind occuring in dependence on the body, sharing its conditioned, impermanent, and insubstantial nature. This knowledge of insight, brought to its apex, issues in the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers. A fuller account of insight-knowledge will be given in the next chapter.

The second auxiliary type of higher knowledge is the knowledge of the mind-created body. This knowledge seems similar to the *iddhis*, and is in fact called *manomayiddhi*, but it is not included in the *iddhividhañāṇa*. The textual description reads:

> With his mind thus concentrated…, he creates from this body another body which has material form, is mind-made, having all its major and minor parts, not deficient in any sense organ.[3] (Wr. tr.).

The Buddha compares the process by which a bhikkhu mentally creates another body resembling his own and draws it out from the original to the act by which a man draws a reed from its sheath, a sword from its scabbard, or a snake from its slough. In each case the extracted article resembles its container but can be seen as clearly distinct from it.[4] The *Visuddhimagga* explains that if a meditator wishes to create the mind-made body he should emerge from the basic fourth *jhāna*, advert to his own body, and resolve that his body be hollow. When it presents itself to him as hollow, he should do the preliminary work and then resolve: "Let there be another body inside it." Another body then appears within his original body which he can draw out "like a reed from its sheath, like a sword from its scabbard, like a snake from its slough."[5]

---

1. Dial. 1:86-87. "So evaṃ samāhite citte… ñāṇadassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So evaṃ pajānāti: 'Ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātummahābhūtiko mātāpettikasambhavo odānakummāsupacayo aniccucchādanaparimaddanabhedanaviddhaṃsanadhammo, idaṃ ca pana me viññāṇaṃ ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddhaṃ' ti." DN. 1:76.

2. DN.A. 1:197.

3. "So evaṃ samāhite citte… So imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṇgapaccangiṃ ahīnindriyaṃ." DN. 1:77.

4. *Ibid*.

5. PP., p. 444. Vism., p. 342.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga describes one other supernormal power of the *iddhi* type not explicitly mentioned in the suttas, though implied by certain incidents. This is the supernormal power of transformation (*vikubbaṇa iddhi*). The Paṭisambhidāmagga exposition of this power reads:

> He abandons his normal appearance and shows the appearance of a boy or the appearance of a Naga (serpent), or the appearance of a Supanna (winged demon), or the appearance of an Asura (demon), or the appearance of the Ruler [of Gods] (Indra), or the appearance of some [other sensual sphere] deity, or the appearance of a Brahmā, or the appearance of the sea, or the appearance of a rock or the appearance of a lion, or the appearance of a tiger, or the appearance of a leopard, or he shows an elephant, or he shows a horse, or he shows a chariot, or he shows a foot soldier, or he shows a manifold military array.[1]

To attain this power, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, the meditator should first resolve to appear in a particular form, such as the form of a boy. Then he should enter and emerge from the basic fourth *jhāna* and advert to his appearance in the form chosen. Again he should enter the *jhāna*, emerge, and resolve, "Let me be a boy, etc. of such and such a type." Simultaneously with his resolution he appears as a boy or as anything else he chooses. However, it is not necessary for the meditator to effect the transformation on his own body. He can simply resolve upon showing some form, such as an elephant, a horse, etc., and that form will become manifest before himself and others.[2]

The Jhānas and Rebirth

According to Buddhist doctrine the influence of the *jhānas* is not confined merely to this present existence but extends beyond to future lives, determining an individual's destiny in the course of his movement through *saṃsāra*. The Buddha teaches that all sentient beings in whom ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) remain present, even if only dormantly, are subject to rebirth. As long as there is a desire to go on existing in some form the process of existence will continue. The craving for existence lies at the hub of the wheel of becoming, sustaining its constant revolution.

The specific factor which determines the place and conditions of rebirth is *kamma*. *Kamma* is volitional action – deeds, words, and thoughts expressive of deliberate intention. *Kammas* are of two general kinds: unwholesome *kammas* (*akusalakamma*), which are actions rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion, and wholesome *kammas* (*kusalakamma*), which are actions rooted in non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion. Each *kamma* or intentional action that a person performs becomes accumulated in his mental continuum, where it remains as a force capable of producing results (*vipāka*) in the future. These results correspond to the ethical quality of the action: wholesome

1. PP., p. 444. Vism., p. 342. Pts., p. 388.

2. PP., p. 444. Vism., p. 342.

kammas bring happiness and success, unwholesome *kammas* bring suffering and failure. In relation to the rebirth process, wholesome *kammas* issue in a good rebirth, unwholesome *kammas* in a bad one.

Of the many *kammas* a person performs and accumulates in the course of his lifetime, one *kamma* will come to the surface at the time of death to determine his state of rebirth. The *kammas* that take on this decisive role are ranked into grades of precedence. Priority is given to morally weighty *kamma* (*garuka kamma*), extremely powerful virtuous or evil deeds. Weighty virtuous deeds are the attainment of the *jhānas*; weighty evil deeds include patricide, matricide, killing an arahat, wounding a Buddha, and causing schism in the Sangha. Next in order come morally significant deeds performed near the time of death, then habitual actions, and lastly, miscellaneous stored up *kammas*.[1] Those *kammas* which do not actually generate rebirth can still produce their results in the course of a person's life, either supporting, countering, or annihilating the effects of the rebirth-generative *kamma*.

According to Buddhist cosmology, there are many planes of existence where beings can take rebirth through their *kamma*. These planes are grouped into three general spheres: the sense sphere (*kāmāvacarabhūmi*), which is the field of rebirth for evil *kammas* and for non-*jhānic* meritorious *kammas*; the fine material sphere (*rūpāvacarabhūmi*), which is the field of rebirth for the fine material *jhānas*; and the immaterial sphere (*arūpāvacarabhūmi*), which is the field of rebirth for the immaterial attainments.[2]

If an unwholesome *kamma* becomes determinative of rebirth, it will produce rebirth in one of four planes: [1] the woeful state (*niraya*), which itself has many subdivisions; [2] the animal kingdom (*tiracchānayoni*): [3] the sphere of tormented spirits or "hungry ghosts" (*pettivisaya*); and [4] the host of titans (*asurakāya*). These four states are collectively called the plane of misery (*apāyabhūmi*), the bad destinations (*duggati*), and the downfall (*vinipāta*). If a wholesome *kamma* of a type below the level of mundane *jhānas* determines rebirth, it will produce rebirth in either the human world (*manussa-loka*) or in one of the six sense sphere heavenly worlds, namely: (1] the realm of the four great kings (*cātummahārājikadevaloka*), [2] the realm of the thirty-three gods (*tāvatiṃsa*); [3] the realm of Yama gods (*yāma*); [4] the realm of delight (*tusita*); [5] the realm of gods who rejoice in their own creations (*nimmānarati*); and, [6] the realm of gods who lord over the creations of others (*paranimmitavasavatti*). These seven realms, the human world and the six heavenly worlds, together make up the sense sphere plane of happiness (*kāmāvacara sugatibhūmi*).[3]

Above the sense sphere realms are the fine material realms (*rūpāvacarabhūmi*). Rebirth into these realms is gained through the attainment of the four fine material *jhānas*, providing the *jhāna* is still retained at the time of death. There are altogether sixteen realms in the fine material plane. These are correlated with the four *jhānas* in a

1. Narada, *Manual*., pp. 259-62.

2. For a good synopsis of Buddhist cosmology and its connection with rebirth, see *Ibid*., pp. 233-55.

3. *Ibid*., pp. 233, 236-39.

systematic way. For each of the three lower *jhānas* there are three realms of rebirth, graded according to whether the *jhāna* was mastered to an inferior, middling, or superior degree; for the fourth *jhāna* the division is different, as we will see.

Those who have practiced the first *jhāna* to a minor degree are reborn in the realm of the retinue of Brahmā (*brahmapārisajja*), those who have practiced it to a moderate degree are reborn in the realm of the ministers of Brahmā (*brahmapurohita*), and those who have practiced it to a superior degree are reborn in the realm of the great Brahmā (*mahābrahmā*). Similarly, practicing the second *jhāna* to a minor degree brings rebirth in the realm of minor luster (*parittābha*), to a moderate degree rebirth in the realm of infinite luster (*appamānābha*), and to a superior degree in the realm of radiant luster (*ābhassara*). Again, practicing the third *jhāna* to a minor degree brings rebirth in the realm of minor aura (*parittasubha*), to a moderate degree in the realm of infinite aura (*appamānasubha*), and to a superior degree in the realm of steady aura (*subhakiṇhā*).

Corresponding to the fourth *jhāna* there are seven realms: the realm of great reward (*vehapphala*), the realm of non-percipient beings (*asaññasatta*), and the five pure abodes (*suddhāvāsa*). With this *jhāna* the previous pattern is not observed. It seems that all beings who practice the fourth *jhāna* of the mundane level without reaching any supramundane attainment are reborn in the realm of great reward.

There is no differentiation by way of inferior, moderate, or superior grades of development. The realm of non-percipient beings is reached by those who attain the fourth *jhāna* and then use the power of their attainment to take rebirth with only material bodies; they do not acquire consciousness again until they pass away from this realm. The five pure abodes are called the durable realm (*aviha*), the serene realm (*atappa*), the beautiful realm (*sudassi*), the clear-sighted realm (*sudassa*), and the highest realm (*akaniṭṭha*). These five realms are open only to non-returners (*anāgāmis*), noble disciples who have eradicated the fetters binding them to the sense sphere and thence automatically take rebirth in higher realms. From here they attain arahatship and reach final deliverance.

Beyond the fine material sphere lie the immaterial realms (*arūpāvacarabhūmi*). These are four in number – the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception. As should be evident, these are the realms of rebirth for those who, without having broken the fetters that bind them to *saṃsāra*, achieve and master the four immaterial *jhānas*. Those yogins who have mastery over these attainments at the time of death take rebirth in the appropriate plane, where they abide until the *kammic* force of the *jhāna* is exhausted. Then they pass away, to take rebirth in some other realm as determined by their accumulated *kamma*.[1]

1. For a schematic diagram of the planes of Buddhist cosmology and their connection with *kamma*, see Appendix 5.

Chapter Seven

THE WAY OF WISDOM

The goal of the Buddhist path is not a temporary appeasement of mental affliction but complete and permanent liberation from suffering. To facilitate the achievement of this goal the Buddha has divided his path into three stages of training – moral discipline (*sīla*) concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). Each stage in this triad serves as the foundation for the next and the entire set as the foundation for deliverance:

> Such is moral discipline, such is concentration, such is wisdom. Concentration supported by moral discipline brings great benefit and fruit, wisdom supported by concentration brings great benefit and fruit. The mind supported by wisdom is completely liberated from the cankers – from the canker of sensual desire, the canker of existence, the canker of views, and the canker of ignorance.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The mundane *jhānas*, comprising the four fine material *jhānas* and four immaterial *jhānas*, pertain to the stage of concentration. As such they form an important part of the training. However, taken by themselves, the *jhānas* do not suffice to ensure complete deliverance from suffering. They lead a long part of the way to the goal, but to attain the final cessation of suffering they must ultimately be supplemented and fulfilled by the final stage of practice, the training in wisdom.

In the present chapter we will examine the nature of wisdom and the methods by which it is cultivated. Beginning with a general explanation of wisdom and its function in the framework of the Buddhist path, we then move on to discuss the course laid down for its development. The basis for our discussion will be the seven purifications (*sattavisuddhi*), the principal categorical system used by the Theravāda tradition to treat the stages in the unfolding of wisdom. Since wisdom presupposes a certain proficiency in concentration it is inevitable that *jhāna* comes to claim a place in its development. This place, however, is not fixed and invariable, but as we will see allows for wide differences depending on the individual meditator's disposition.

Fundamental to the discussion in this chapter and the next is a distinction between two terms crucial to Theravāda philosophical exposition. These two terms are "mundane" (*lokiya*) and "supramundane" (*lokuttara*). The term "mundane" applies to all phenomena comprised in the world (*loka*) of the five aggregates of clinging (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*) – material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. It covers subtle states of consciousness as well as material and emotional states, virtue as well as evil, meditative attainments as well as sensual engrossments.

1. "Iti sīlaṃ iti samādhi iti paññā, sīla-paribhāvito samādhi mahapphalo hoti mahānisaṃso, samādhi-paribhāvitā paññā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā, paññāparibhāvitaṃ cittaṃ sammad eva āsavehi vimuccati, seyyathīdaṃ kāmāsavā bhavāsavā diṭṭhāsavā avijjāsavā ti." DN. 2:123.

The term "supramundane", in contrast, applies exclusively to that which transcends the world of the clinging-aggregates. It covers nine terms, the nine *lokuttarā dhammā*: *nibbāna*, the four noble paths (*magga*) leading to *nibbāna*, and their corresponding four fruits (*phala*) which experience the bliss of *nibbāna*. It is hoped that the discussion to follow will make the meanings of these terms clear.

The Nature of Wisdom

The reason the mundane *jhānas* cannot by themselves bring final liberation from suffering is because they are incapable of cutting off the causes of suffering. The Buddha teaches that the fundamental source of suffering, the driving power behind the cycle of rebirths, is the defilements (*kilesa*), principally the three unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, and delusion. Concentration of the absorptive level, no matter how deeply it might be developed, only leads to a suspension of the defilements, not to their radical elimination. As we saw earlier, concentration whether access or *jhāna*, abandons the hindrances solely by way of suppression (*vikkhambanappahāna*).[1] Even at its deepest it cannot effect the more fundamental abandonment required for liberation, namely, the abandonment by eradication (*samuccnedappahāna*).[2]

Because it cannot dismantle the latent seeds of the defilements, bare mundane *jhāna* does not figure as a sufficient attainment in the Buddhist map of the liberating path. Mundane *jhāna* suffers from two conspicuous defects. Firstly, if not persisted in, it can be lost. Through carelessness or complacency a yogin can again be overpowered by the force of the defilements, thereby falling away from *jhāna* and the rest of his spiritual training. Thus the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita describes the case of a monk who attains the four *jhānas*, and thinking to himself complacently "I have won the four *jhānas*"

> … keeps company with monks, nuns, lay-disciples, men and women, rajahs, their ministers, course-setters or their disciples. Living in company, untrammelled, rude, given over to gossip, passion corrupts his heart; and with his heart corrupted by passion, he disavows the training and returns to the lower life.[3]

The second defect which besets the *jhānas* is that bare mundane *jhāna*, even when sustained, does not by itself terminate the cycle of rebirths. To the the contrary, it even perpetuates the round in its own way. For each fine material and immaterial *jhāna* attained, if held to with delight and clinging, brings about a rebirth in that particular plane of existence corresponding to its own *kammic* potency, which can then be followed

1. See above Ch. III, pp. 76-80.

2. *Ibid*.

3. GS. 3: p. 280. "So saṃsaṭṭho viharati bhikkhūhi bhikkhunīhi upāsakehi upāsikāhi raññā rājamahāmattehi titthiyehi titthitiyasāvakehi, tassa saṃsaṭṭhassa vissaṭṭhassa pakatassa bhassaṃ anuyuttassa viharato rāgo cittaṃ anuddhaṃseti, so rāgānuddhaṃsena cittena sikkhaṃ paccakkhāya hīnāyāvattati." AN. 3.393.

by a rebirth in some lower realm when the generative *kamma* of the *jhāna* is exhausted. As the Buddha says:

> Now, monks, a certain person here, aloof from sense-desires, aloof from evil conditions, enters upon the first musing [*jhāna*], which is accompanied by thought directed and sustained, born of seclusion, zestful and easeful, and abides therein. He enjoys its sweetness, longs for it and finds happiness therein. Established therein, given thereto, generally spending his time therein and not falling away therefrom, when he makes an end he is reborn in the company of devas of the Brahma-group. A kalpa, monks, is the life-span of the devas of the Brahma-group. Therein the ordinary man stays and spends his time according to the life-span of those devas; then he goes to purgatory or the womb of an animal, he goes to the peta-realm.[1]

The same pattern is repeated for each of the higher attainments. i.e., the remaining *jhānas* and the *āruppas*.[2]

What is required to achieve complete deliverance from the cycle of rebirths is the eradication of the unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, and delusion. Since the most basic of these roots is delusion (*moha*), also called ignorance (*avijjā*), the key to liberation lies in the eradication of ignorance by developing its direct opposite, namely wisdom (*paññā*). For this reason the Buddha places wisdom at the head of all the spiritual faculties. It appears among the groups of training factors as the basis for success consisting in inquiry (*vīmaṃsā-iddhipāda*), the faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*), the power of wisdom (*paññābala*), the investigation of phenomena enlightenment factor (*dhammavicaya sambojjhaṅga*), and right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) of the Noble Eightfold Path. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi in its definition of the faculty of wisdom spells out a whole list of equivalent terms, which testifies to its importance and the unrivalled esteem in which it is held:

> The wisdom which there is on that occasion is understanding, search, research, searching the truth, discernment, discrimination, differentiation, erudition, proficiency, subtlety, criticism, reflection, analysis, breadth, sagacity, leading, insight, intelligence, incitement, wisdom as faculty, wisdom as power, wisdom as a sword, wisdom as a height, wisdom as light, wisdom as glory, wisdom as splendour, wisdom as a precious stone, the absence of dullness, searching the Truth, right views, – this is the wisdom that there then is.[3]

---

1. GS. 2:130. "Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajam pītisukhaṃ paṭhamajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So tad assādeti taṃ nikāmeti tena ca vittiṃ āpajjati, tattha ṭhito tad-adhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno Brahmakāyikānaṃ devānaṃ sahavyataṃ uppajjati. Brahmakāyikānaṃ bhikkhave devānaṃ kappo āyuppamānaṃ, tattha puthujjano yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamānaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā nirayaṃ pi gacchati tiracchānayoniṃ pi gacchati pittivisayaṃ pi gacchati." AN. 2:126.

2. GS. 1:245-46. AN. 1:267-68.

3. *Psy. Ethics*, p. 18. "Katamaṃ tasmiṃ samaye paññidriyaṃ hoti? Yā tasmiṃ samaye paññā pajānanā vicayo pavicayo sallakkhaṇā upalakkhaṇā paccūpalakkhaṇā pandiccaṃ kosallaṃ nepuṇṇaṃ vebhabyā cintā upaparikkhā bhūri medhā parināyikā vipassanā sampajaññaṃ patodo pañña paññindriyaṃ paññābalaṃ

An analytical exposition of wisdom found in the *Visuddhimagga*[1] discusses wisdom under six headings: [1] the definition of wisdom; [2] the sense in which it is called wisdom; [3] its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause; [4] its classification; [5] method of development; and [6] its benefits. A brief consideration of these principles should help bring the nature of wisdom to light.

[1] Wisdom, according to Buddhaghosa, is defined as insight knowledge associated with wholesome states of consciousness.[2]

[2] Wisdom (*paññā*) is so called in the sense that it is an act of understanding (*pajānana*). It is a mode of knowing (*jānana*) distinct from and superior to the modes of perceiving (*sañjānana*) and cognizing (*vijānana*). What distinguishes wisdom from these other forms of cognition is its ability to comprehend the characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness and thereby to bring about the manifestation of the supramundane path.[3]

[3] Wisdom has the specific characteristic of penetrating the true nature of phenomena.[4] Each phenomenon possesses its own particular characteristic as well as the general characteristics common to all phenomena. The particular and general characteristics together make up the "true nature" (*sabhāva*) of phenomena. Wisdom is the penetration of this nature through direct, unmediated cognition. Its function is "to abolish the darkness of delusion which conceals the individual essences of states" and its manifestation is "non-delusion." Since the Buddha says that one whose mind is concentrated knows and sees things as they are, the proximate cause of wisdom is concentration.[5]

[4] The wisdom instrumental in attaining liberation is divided into two principal types: insight-knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) and the knowledge pertaining to the supramundane paths (*magga-ñāṇa*). The first is the direct penetration of the three characteristics of conditioned phenomena – impermanence (*aniccatā*), suffering (*dukkhatā*), and selflessness (*anattatā*). It takes as its objective sphere the groups of mental phenomena constituting individual existence, i.e. the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*) of material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.[6] Because insight-knowledge takes the world (*loka*) of conditioned formations (*saṅkhāra*) as its object it is regarded as a mundane (*lokiya*) form of wisdom. Insight-knowledge does not itself

---

paññāsattaṃ paññāpasādo paññā āloko paññāobhāso paññāpajjoto paññāratanaṃ amoho dhammavicayo sammādiṭṭhi – idaṃ tasmiṃ samaye paññindriyaṃ hoti." Dhs., pp. 19-20.

1. PP., pp. 479-89. Vism., pp. 369-75.

2. PP., p. 479. "Kusalacittasampayuttaṃ vipassanāññānaṃ paññā." Vism., p. 369.

3. PP., p. 480. Vism., p. 369.

4. PP., p. 481. "Dhammasabhāvapaṭivedhalakkhaṇā paññā." Vism., p. 370.

5. PP., p. 481. "Dhammānaṃ sabhāvapaṭicchādaka-mohāndhakāra-viddhaṃsanarasā; asammohapaccupaṭṭhānā; samāhito yathābhūtaṃ jānāti passatī ti [AN. 5:3] vacanato pana samādhi tassa padaṭṭhānaṃ." Vism., p. 370.

6. In Pāli: *Rūpakkhandha*, *vedanākkhandha*, *saññākkhandha*, *saṅkhārakkhandha*, *viññāṇakkhandha*.

directly eradicate the defilements. It serves to prepare the way for the second type of wisdom, the wisdom of the supramundane paths, which emerges when insight has been brought to its climax. The wisdom of the path, occurring in the four distinct stages of the supramundane Noble Eightfold Path (to be discussed below), simultaneously realizes *nibbāna*, fathoms the Four Noble Truths, and cuts off the defilements. This wisdom is called "supramundane" (*lokuttara*) because it rises up (*uttarati*) from the world (*loka*) of the five aggregates to realize the state transcendent to the world, *nibbāna*.

[5] The Buddhist yogin, striving for deliverance, begins the development of wisdom by first securely establishing its roots – purified moral discipline and concentration. He then learns and masters the basic material upon which wisdom is to work – the aggregates, elements, sense bases, dependent arising, the Four Noble Truths, etc. He commences the actual practice of wisdom by cultivating insight into the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of the five aggregates. When this insight reaches its apex it issues in supramundane wisdom, the right view factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. The wisdom of the path turns from conditioned formations to the unconditioned *nibbāna*, destroying thereby the latent defilements at their root.

[6] The removal of the defilements, the experiencing of *nibbāna*, and the achievement of the states of holiness culminating in arahatship – these, according to Buddhaghosa, are the benefits in developing wisdom.[1]

The Two Vehicles

The Theravāda tradition recognizes two alternative approaches to the development of wisdom, between which yogins are free to choose according to their aptitude and propensity. These two approaches are the vehicle of serenity (*samathayāna*) and the vehicle of insight (*vipassanayāna*). The meditators who follow them are called, respectively, the *samathayānika*, "one who makes serenity his vehicle," and the *vipassanāyānika*, "one who makes insight his vehicle." Since both vehicles, despite their names, are approaches to developing insight, to prevent misunderstanding the latter type of meditator is sometimes called a *suddhavipassanāyānika*, "one who makes bare insight his vehicle," or a *sukkhavipassaka*, "a dry insight worker." Though all three terms appear initially in the commentaries rather than in the sutras, the recognition of the two vehicles seems implicit in a number of canonical passages.

The *samathayānika* is a meditator who first attains access concentration or one of the eight mundane *jhānas*, then emerges and uses his attainment as a basis for cultivating insight until he arrives at the supramundane path. The experience of the path in any of its four stages always occurs at a level of *jhānic* intensity and thus necessarily includes supramundane *jhāna* under the heading of right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*), the eighth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. In contrast to the *samathayānika*, the *vipassanāyānika* does not attain mundane *jhāna* prior to practicing insight-contemplation, or if he does, does not use it as an instrument for cultivating insight. Instead,

1. See Vism., Chapter XXIII.

without entering and emerging from *jhāna*, he proceeds directly to insight-contemplation on the mental and material phenomena that appear in the six spheres of sense experience – the five outer senses and thought. By means of this bare insight he reaches the noble path, which as in the former case again includes supramundane *jhāna* as a matter of necessity.

The kingpost of the *vipassanāyānika*'*s* approach is the practice of mindfulness (*sati*), the bare non-discursive observation of the changing phenomena of mind and body. The Buddha expounds the practice of mindfulness in terms of four contemplations – the contemplation of body (*kāya*), feelings (*vedanā*), states of mind (*citta*), and mind-objects (*dhamma*). These four contemplations, the four "foundations of mindfulness" (*sati-paṭṭhāna*), bring to the focus of the observational field the diverse classes of mental and material phenomena with their universal marks of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. The *samathayānika*, too, at the time he emerges from *jhāna* and begins insight-contemplation, has to practice the four foundations of mindfulness, as these have been called by the Buddha "the only way that leads to the attainment of purity, to the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, to the end of pain and grief, to the entering upon the right path and the realization of *Nibbāna*."[1]

The classical source for the distinction between the two vehicles of serenity and insight is the *Visuddhimagga*, where it is explained that when a meditator begins the development of wisdom

> … if, firstly, his vehicle is serenity, [he] should emerge from any fine material or immaterial jhāna except the base consisting of neither perception nor non-perception, and he should discern, according to characteristic, function, etc. the jhāna factors consisting of applied thought, etc. and the states associated with them.[2]

The meditator whose vehicle is pure insight, on the other hand, is advised to begin by discerning material and mental phenomena directly, without utilizing a *jhāna* for this purpose.[3]

A contemporary meditation master, the Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw, draws the distinction between the two types of meditators in more general terms:

> A person who, of these two, has first developed tranquility, and after having established himself in either access concentration or full concentration, subsequently contemplates the five groups of grasping, is called a *samathayānika*, i.e. one who has tranquility as his vehicle… He, however, who

1. Nyanatiloka, *The Word of the Buddha*, p. 61.

2. PP., pp. 679-80. "Taṃ sampādetukāmena samathayānikena tāva, ṭhapetvā nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ avasesarūpārūpavacarajjhānānaṃ aññatarato vuṭṭhāya vitakkādīni jhānaṅgāni taṃsampayuttā ca dhammā lakkhaṇarasādivasena pariggahetabbā." Vism., p. 503. NB: Other commentarial passages allow access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) to suffice for the vehicle of serenity. The last *āruppa* is excluded because its factors are too subtle to be discerned by a beginning meditator.

3. PP., p. 680. Vism., p. 503.

> has neither produced access concentration nor full concentration, but from the very start applies insight to the five groups of grasping, is called a *suddhavipassanāyānika*, i.e. one who has pure insight as his vehicle.[1]

This second type of meditator is sometimes referred to by another name, *sukkhavipassaka* or "dry insight worker," which the commentary to the *Visuddhimagga* explains in a way that accentuates his lack of *jhāna*:

> The dry insight worker is one who does not obtain [mundane] *jhāna*, but makes pure insight his vehicle. He is called a "dry insight worker" because his insight is dry and rough, as this insight has not been moistened with the moisture of *jhāna*.[2] (Wr. tr.).

Although, as we mentioned earlier, the three terms – *samathayānika*, *vipassanāyānika*, and *sukkhavipassaka* – are terms of commentarial coinage, the distinction of vehicles and practitioners seems to draw directly from the Pāli Canon. The Buddha generally includes the four *jhānas* in complete expositions of his system of training, placing them before the development of insight and the attainment of the path, but a number of suttas give evidence for alternative approaches to the practice. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha states:

> There is, monks, one person who gains internal serenity of mind but does not gain the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena;… one person who gains the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena but does not gain internal serenity of mind;… one person who gains neither;… and one person who gains both…[3] (Wr. tr.).

He urges the first, established on his serenity of mind, to strive to gain the wisdom of insight into phenomena, and the second, established on his wisdom or insight into phenomena, to strive to gain serenity of mind. The commentary explains "serenity of mind" as mental concentration of absorption (*appanācittasamādhi*) and the "higher wisdom of insight into phenomena" as the insight-knowledge discerning formations (*saṅkhārapariggahavipassanāñāṇa*), i.e. insight into the five aggregates.[4] The fact that individuals are capable of one attainment in the absence of the other provides a starting point for a differentiation of vehicles adapted to their differing capacities. In the end,

---

1. Mahāsi Sayadaw (U Sobhana Mahāthera of Burma), *The Progress of Insight Through the Stages of Purification*, *A Modern Pali Treatise on Buddhist Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation*, translated by Nyanaponika Thera with notes and the original Pāli text. (Kandy, Ceylon: The Forest Hermitage, 1965; reprint, Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1973), p. 2 (hereafter cited as PI.).

2. "Ajhānalābhī suddhavipassanāyānikova sukkhavipassako. So hi jhānasinehena vipassanāya asiniddhabhāvato sukkhā lūkhā vipassanā etassāti sukkhavipassakoti vuccati." Vism.T. 2:474.

3. "Tatra bhikkhave yāyaṃ puggalo lābhī ajjhattaṃ cetosamathassa na lābhī adhipaññādhammavipassanāya;… lābhī adhipaññādhammavipassanāya na lābhī ajjhattaṃ cetosamathassa;… na c'eva lābhī ajjhattaṃ cetosamathassa na lābhī adhipaññādhammavipassanāya;… yāyaṃ puggalo lābhī c'eva ajjhattaṃ cetosamathassa lābhī adhipaññādhammavipassanāya." AN. 2:92-93.

4. AN.A. 2:325.

however, all meditators have to enter upon the development of insight in order to reach the liberating path.

An even clearer enunciation of alternative vehicles to the goal is presented in a sutta spoken by the Venerable Ānanda. On one occasion Ānanda declared to a group of monks that there are some monks who develop insight preceded by serenity (*samathapubbaṅgamaṃ vipassanaṃ*) and some who develop serenity preceded by insight (*vipassanāpubbaṅgamaṃ samathaṃ*). Both approaches, in his account, issue in the supramundane path:

> Herein, your reverences, a monk develops insight preceded by calm. In him thus developing insight preceded by calm is born the Way. He follows along that Way, makes it grow, makes much of it. In him following, developing, making much of that Way, the fetters are abandoned, the lurking tendencies come to an end. Or again, your reverences, a monk develops calm preceded by insight. In him developing calm preceded by insight is born the Way. He follows along that Way, makes it grow,… come to an end.[1]

The commentarial exegesis of this passage (found in the Majjhima Nikāya commentary) explains the procedure for developing insight preceded by serenity thus:

> Here, someone first produces access concentration or absorption concentration; this is serenity. He contemplates with insight that serenity and its concomitant phenomena as impermanent, etc.; this is insight. Thus first comes serenity, afterwards insight.[2] (Wr. tr.).

The procedure for developing serenity preceded by insight is described as follows:

> Here, someone contemplates with insight the five aggregates of clinging as impermanent, etc. without having produced the aforesaid kinds of serenity (access and absorption); this is insight. With the completion of insight there arises in him mental one-pointedness having as object the renunciation of the phenomena produced therein; this is serenity. Thus first comes insight, afterwards serenity.[3] (Wr. tr.).

In case it should be suspected that the second type of meditator still attains mundane *jhāna* after developing insight, the subcommentary to the passage points out: "the mental one-pointedness he gains is right concentration of the supramundane path

---

1. GS. 2:162. "Idha āvuso bhikkhu samathapubbaṅgamaṃ vipassanaṃ bhāveti, tassa samathapubbaṅgamaṃ vipassanaṃ bhāvayato maggo sañjāyati. So taṃ maggaṃ āsevati bhāveti bahulīkaroti. Tassa taṃ maggaṃ āsevato bhāvayato bahulīkaroto saññojanāni pahīyanti anusayā vyanti honti. Puna ca paraṃ āvuso bhikkhu vipassanāpubbaṅgamaṃ samathaṃ bhāveti, tassa vipassanāpubbaṅgamaṃ samathaṃ bhāvayato maggo sañjāyati… vyanti honti." AN. 2:157.

2. "Idhekacco paṭhamaṃ upacārasamādhiṃ vā appanāsamādhiṃ vā uppādeti. Ayaṃ samatho. So taṃ ca taṃ sampayutte ca dhamme aniccādihi vipassati. Ayaṃ vipassanā. Iti paṭhamaṃ samatho pacchā vipassanā." MN.A. 1:112.

3. "Idha panekacco vuttappakāraṃ samathaṃ anuppādetvā'va pañcupādānakkhandhe aniccādihi vipassati. Ayaṃ vipassanā. Tassa vipassnāpāripūriyā tattha jātānaṃ dhammānaṃ vossaggārammaṇato uppajjati cittassa ekaggatā. Ayaṃ samatho. Iti paṭhamaṃ vipassanā; pacchā samatho." MN.A. 1:113.

(*maggasammāsamādhi*) and its object, called 'renunciation' (*vavassagga*), is *nibbāna*."[1] (Wr. tr.). The Aṅguttara subcommentary explicitly identifies the second meditator with the *vipassanāyānika*: "'He develops serenity preceded by insight': this is said with reference to the *vipassanāyānika*."[2] (Wr. tr.).

Thus the *samathayānika* attains in order first access concentration or mundane *jhāna* and then insight-knowledge, by means of which he reaches the supramundane path containing wisdom under the heading of right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) and supramundane *jhāna* under the heading of right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*). The *vipassanāyānika*, in contrast, skips over mundane *jhāna* and goes directly into insight-contemplation. When he reaches the end of the progression of insight-knowledge he arrives at the supramundane path which, as in the previous case, brings together wisdom with supramundane *jhāna*. This *jhāna* counts as his accomplishment of serenity.

The Functions of Jhāna

For a meditator following the vehicle of serenity the attainment of *jhāna* fulfills two functions: first, it produces a basis of mental purity and inner collectedness needed for undertaking the work of insight-contemplation; and second, it serves as an object for the yogin to examine with insight in order to discern the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. *Jhāna* accomplishes the first function by providing a powerful instrument for overcoming the five hindrances, the defilements of sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. As we saw, the Buddha declares these five hindrances to be corruptions of the mind and weakeners of wisdom which prevent a man from seeing things as they are, cause blindness and ignorance, destroy wisdom, lead to vexation, and distract from *nibbāna*.[3] For wisdom to arise the mind must first be concentrated well, and to be concentrated it must be freed from the obscuring influence of the hindrances. This task is accomplished by the attainment of *jhāna*: access concentration causes the hindrances to subside, the first and following *jhānas* drive them further and further away. Cleared of the hindrances the mind becomes "pliant and supple, having radiant lucidity and firmness, and will concentrate well upon the eradication of the taints."[4] Therefore the *jhānas* are recommended as a means to provide the concentration and mental purification needed to cultivate wisdom.

In their capacity for producing concentration the *jhānas* are called the basis (*pāda*) for insight, and that particular *jhāna* a yogin enters and emerges from before commencing his practice of insight is designated the *pādakajjhāna*, the basic or foundational *jhāna*.

---

1. MN.T. 1:204.

2. "Vipassanāpubbaṅgamaṃ samathaṃ bhāveti ti idaṃ pana vipassanāyānikassa vasena vuttaṃ." Sāriputta, [*Aṅguttara Nikāya Ṭīkā*] *Sāratthamañjūsā Nāma Aṅguttara Ṭīkā*. [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. (Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960-61), 2:344 (hereafter cited as AN.T.).

3. See above, Ch. III, pp. 104-108.

4. *Ibid*., p. 108.

Insight cannot be practiced while absorbed in *jhāna*, since insight-meditation requires analysis, investigation, and observation, all of which are impossible when the thought faculty is immersed in one-pointed absorption. But after emerging from the *jhāna* the mind is cleared of the hindrances, and the stillness and clarity that then result conduce to precise, penetrating insight.

The *jhānas* also enter into the *samathayānika*'*s* practice in a second capacity; that is, as objects for scrutinization by insight. The practice of insight consists essentially in the examination of mental and physical phenomena to discover their marks of impermanence (*aniccatā*), suffering (*dukkhatā*), and selflessness (*anattatā*). The *jhānas* a yogin has attained and emerged from provide him with a readily available and strikingly clear object in which to seek out the three characteristics. After emerging from a *jhāna* the meditator will proceed to examine the *jhānic* consciousness, analyzing it into its components, defining them in their precise particularity, and discerning the way they exemplify the three universal marks. This process is called *sammasanañāṇa*, "comprehension-knowledge," and the *jhāna* subjected to such a treatment is termed the *sammasitajjhāna*, "the comprehended *jhāna*."[1] Though the basic *jhāna* and the comprehended *jhāna* will often be the same, the two do not necessarily coincide. A yogin cannot practice comprehension on a *jhāna* higher than he is capable of attaining, but a yogin who uses a higher *jhāna* as his *pādakajjhāna* can still practice insight-comprehension on lower *jhānas* he has previously attained and mastered. This admitted difference in nature between the *pādaka* and *sammasitajjhānas* leads to discrepant theories about the supramundane concentration of the noble path, as we will see below.[2]

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha shows how arahatship, "the destruction of the cankers," is attained by a *samathayānika* yogin who attains a basic *jhāna* and after emerging from it makes that same *jhāna* the object of insight-comprehension:

> I say, monks, that the destruction of the cankers occurs in dependence on the first *jhāna*. With reference to what is this said? Here, monks, a monk enters and abides in the first *jhāna*… Whatever is contained there belonging to material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness – he contemplates these phenomena as impermanent, suffering, a disease, a boil, a dart, as misery, affliction, alien, disintegrating, empty, and selfless. He turns his mind away from those phenomena and focusses it on the deathless element… Standing upon that he reaches the destruction of the cankers.[3] (Wr. tr.).

1. PP., pp. 706-709. Vism., pp. 521-22.

2. See below pp. 347-51.

3. "Paṭhamaṃ p'āhaṃ bhikkhave jhānaṃ nissāya āsavānaṃ khāyaṃ vadāmī ti iti kho pan'etaṃ vuttaṃ, kin c'etaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ? Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu vivicc'eva kāmehi… paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati… So yad eva tattha hoti rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññāṇagataṃ, te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābadhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati. So tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivapeti, so tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivapetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasaṃharati… So tattha ṭhito āsavānaṃ khayaṃ pāpuṇāti." AN. 4:422-23.

In entering the first *jhāna* before commencing insight, the meditator makes it his basic or foundational *jhāna*; in contemplating its factors as impermanent, suffering, and selfless (which comprise all the other terms of contemplation) he makes the first *jhāna* his object of insight-comprehension. The Buddha repeats the same procedure, with appropriate modifications, for the remaining fine material *jhānas* and the lower three immaterial *jhānas*; for the last immaterial *jhāna* and the attainment of cessation a variant method is used, as these two states due to their subtlety do not come directly into the range of insight-contemplation.

Whereas the sequence of training undertaken by the *samathayānika* meditator is evident and unproblematic, a difficulty seems to crop up in the case of the *vipassanāyānika*'*s* approach. This difficulty lies in accounting for the concentration he uses to provide a basis for insight. Concentration is needed in order to see and know things as they are. The standard order of practice repeated countless times throughout the canon is moral discipline, concentration, and wisdom, with concentration declared to be the foundation for wisdom. The Buddha calls concentration the supporting condition (*upanisā*) for "the knowledge and vision of things as they really are," while "one who lacks right concentration is deprived of the supporting condition for knowledge and vision of things as they are."[1] (Wr. tr.). Finally, in the sequence of the seven purifications through which all yogins must pass, the second purification – purification of mind (*cittavisuddhi*) – is shown to precede and support the five subsequent purifications that begin with purification of view (*diṭṭhivisuddhi*).[2] Purification of mind is generally defined as access and absorption concentration, and the last five purifications as the wisdom of insight and the path. Since each purification has to be fulfilled in due order before undertaking the next, the same problem surfaces of accounting for the concentration the *vipassanāyānika* uses to arrive at insight.

The solution to this problem is found in a type of concentration distinct from the access and absorption concentrations pertaining to the vehicle of serenity. This type of mental unification is called "momentary concentration" (*khaṇika samādhi*). Despite its name, momentary concentration does not signify a single moment of concentration amidst a current of distracted thoughts. Rather, it denotes a dynamic concentration which flows from object to object in the everchanging flux of phenomena, retaining a constant degree of intensity and collectedness sufficient to purify the mind of the hindrances. Momentary concentration arises in the *samathayānika* yogin simultaneously with his post-*jhānic* attainment of insight, but for the *vipassanāyānika* it develops naturally and spontaneously in the course of his insight practice without his having to fix the mind upon a single exclusive object. Thus the follower of the vehicle of insight does not omit concentration altogether from his training, but develops it in a different manner from the practitioner of serenity. Skipping over the *jhānas*, he goes directly into contemplation on the five aggregates, and by observing them constantly from moment to moment acquires momentary concentration as an accompaniment of his investigations. This momentary

1. "Sammāsamādhisampannassa upanisā sampannaṃ hoti yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṃ… sammāsamādhi-vipannassa hatūpanisaṃ hoti yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṃ." AN. 5:4-5.

2. The seven purifications (*sattavisuddhi*) are discussed in detail in the following section.

concentration fulfills the same function as the basic *jhāna* of the serenity-vehicle, providing the foundation of mental clarity needed for insight to emerge.

The importance of momentary concentration in the vehicle of insight is testified to both by the classical Theravāda exegetical literature and by modern exponents of the "dry *vipassanā*" approach. The *Visuddhimagga*, in its discussion of mindfulness of breathing, states that "at the actual time of insight momentary unification of the mind arises through the penetration of the characteristics (of impermanence, and so on)."[1] Its commentary, the *Paramatthamañjūsā*, defines the phrase "momentary unification of the mind" as concentration lasting only for a moment, stating: "For that too, when it occurs uninterruptedly on its object in a single mode and is not overcome by opposition, fixes the mind immovably, as if in absorption."[2]

The same work contains several other references to momentary concentration. Commenting on Buddhaghosa's remarks that sometimes the path to purification is taught by insight alone, the *Mahā Ṭīkā* points out that this remark is meant to exclude, not all concentration, but only "that concentration with distinction," i.e. access and absorption. It then says: "Taking this stanza [Dhp. v. 277] as the teaching for one whose vehicle is insight does not imply that there is no concentration; for no insight comes about without momentary concentration."[3] A short while later the *Mahā Ṭīkā* again identifies momentary concentration with the type of concentration appropriate to one whose vehicle is insight:

> … supramundane… concentration and insight are impossible without mundane concentration and insight to precede them; for without the access and absorption concentration in one whose vehicle is serenity, or without the momentary concentration in one whose vehicle is insight, and without the Gateways to Liberation…, the supramundane can never in either case be reached.[4]

The commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya, in a passage quoted fully above, states that "someone contemplates with insight the five aggregates of clinging as impermanent, etc. without having produced the aforesaid kinds of serenity."[5] Its subcommentary, clarifying this statement, explains: "The qualification 'without having serenity' is meant to exclude

1. PP., pp. 311-12. "Vipassanākkhaṇe lakkhaṇapaṭivedhena uppajjati khaṇika-cittekaggatā;…" Vism., p. 239.

2. PP., pp. 311-12 Fn. 63. "Khaṇikacittekaggatā'ti khaṇamattaṭṭhitiko samādhi. So'pi hi ārammaṇe nirantaraṃ ekākārena pavattamāno paṭipakkhena anabhibhūto appito viya cittaṃ niccalaṃ ṭhapeti." Vism.T. 1:342.

3. PP., p. 2 Fn. 3. "Matta saddena ca visesanivattiatthena savisesaṃ samādhiṃ nivatteti. So upacārappanābhedo vipassanāyānikassa desanāti katvā na samādhi mattaṃ. Na hi khaṇikasamādhiṃ vinā vipassanā sambhavati." Vism.T. 1:11.

4. PP., p. 3 Fn. 4. "Nānantariyabhāvena panettha lokiyāpi gahitāva honti lokiyasamatha vipassanāya vinā tadabhāvato. Samathayānikassahi upacārappanābhedaṃ samādhiṃ, itarassa khaṇikasamādhiṃ. Ubhayesampi vimokkhamukhattayaṃ vinā na kadācipi lokuttarādhigamo sambhavati." Vism.T. 1:15. For the three gateways to liberation, see below pp. 318-19.

5. See above, p. 294.

access concentration, not momentary concentration, for no insight is possible without momentary concentration."[1] (Wr. tr.).

A concise description of the way momentary concentration arises is presented by the Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw.[2] The Sayadaw explains that a meditator begins the development of insight by attending to the diverse mental and bodily processes that become manifest to him, making the tactile process of the rising and falling of the abdomen his basic object of mindfulness. At first, during the early part of his practice, his mind tends to be distracted by wandering thoughts, but with time his thought-process of noticing becomes well concentrated. When he can notice the objects that appear continuously, undisturbed by hindrances, his practice has arrived at momentary concentration:

> While thus practising the exercise of noticing with 'unhindered mind', the noticing mind will get more close to and fixed at whichever object is noticed, and the act of noticing will proceed without break. At that time there arises in him, in uninterrupted succession, 'the concentration of mind lasting for a moment', directed to each object noticed.[3]

The Sayadaw holds that this momentary concentration claims the place of purification of mind in the dry insight-worker's course of development. He states that though it "has only momentary duration, its power of resistance to being overwhelmed by opposition corresponds to that of access concentration."[4]

Momentary concentration is thus, in contrast to *jhānic* concentration, a fluid type of mental collectedness consisting in the uninterrupted continuity of thoughts engaged in noticing the passing succession of objects. Its objects are varied and changing but its force of concentration remains constant. This force fixes the mind on the object as though fixing it in absorption, holding the hindrances at bay and building up the power of mental purification. For this reason momentary concentration can be understood as implicitly included in access concentration in the standard definitions of purification of mind as consisting in access and absorption.

The Seven Purifications

The path to deliverance, usually expounded in terms of the three trainings in morality, concentration and wisdom, is sometimes divided further into seven stages called the seven purification (*sattavisuddhi*). The canonical basis for this system is the Rathavinīta Sutta (MN. No.24) and the Paṭisambhidāmagga. The scheme claims special prominence in the Theravāda commentarial tradition since it forms the framework for the *Visuddhi-*

---

1. "Samathaṃ anuppādetvāvāti avadhāraṇena upacāra samādhiṃ nivatteti, na khaṇika samādhiṃ; na hi khaṇikasamādhiṃ vinā vipassanā sambhavati." MN.T. 1:204.

2. PI., pp. 4-5.

3. *Ibid*. p. 4.

4. *Ibid*.

magga. As such it comes to the forefront in every discussion of the progressive stages of Buddhist meditation.

According to this scheme in order to attain full liberation the meditator has to pass through seven kinds of purification. The seven are: [1] purification of morality (*sīla visuddhi*); [2] purification of mind (*citta visuddhi*); [3] purification of view (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*); [4] purification by the overcoming of doubt (*kaṅkhāvitaraṇa visuddhi*); [5] purification by knowledge and vision of the right and wrong paths (*maggāmaggañāṇadassana visuddhi*); [6] purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadāñāṇadassana visuddhi*); and [7] purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana visuddhi*). The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* recognizes several other sets of terms essential to the development of wisdom – the three characteristics of phenomena, the three contemplations, the ten kinds of insight knowledge, the three liberations, and the three doors to liberation;[1] but since these all come in the scope of the seven purification we can take the latter as the basis for our discussion, mentioning the others when they become relevant.

1. Purification of Morality (sīlavisuddhi)

The purification of morality is identical with the training in the higher moral discipline (*adhisīlasikkhā*). It consists in the fourfold purification of morality already discussed, i.e. restraint according to the rules of the Pātimokkha, restraint of the senses, purity of livelihood, and purity in the use of requisites.[2] This is the foundation for the growth of insight just as much as for the development of serenity.

2. Purification of Mind (citta visuddhi)

Purification of mind coincides with the training in concentration (*samādhi*) or higher consciousness (*adhicittasikkhā*). It is defined as the eight attalnments of absorption together with access concentration. The *samathayānika* yogin accomplishes purification of mind by achieving access or full absorption in one or several *jhānas*, thereby suppressing the five hindrances. The *vipassanāyānika* disciple, as we noted, achieves purification of mind by means of momentary concentration, which as it overcomes the hindrances can be subsumed under access concentration.

3. Purification of view (diṭṭhi visuddhi)

The remaining five purifications pertain to the training in wisdom. The first four belong to the mundane portion of the path or insight-wisdom (*vipassanā-paññā*), the last to the supramundane portion or the wisdom of the noble path (*magga-ñāṇa*).

Purification of view aims at obtaining a correct perspective on the nature of individual existence. Buddhism teaches that it is the wrong grasp of existence, crystallized in the view of a substantial self, that keeps the unenlightened chained to *saṃsāra*. To reach liberation this delusive view has to be dissolved by purified view, which from the Buddhist standpoint means comprehending the so-called individual as a compound of

1. Nārada. *Manual*., pp. 408-409, 411-12.

2. See above, Ch. II, pp. 28-36.

evanescent material and mental phenomena without any inner core of substance or selfhood. Purification of view is achieved by bringing these phenomena into focus, defining them in terms of their salient characteristics and functions, and using this knowledge to remove the erroneous view of a self-subsistent ego.

The *samathayānika* and *vipassanāyānika* approach this purification from different angles, though the end result is the same for both. The former, after emerging from any fine material or immaterial *jhāna* except the last (which is too subtle for analysis), discerns its *jhāna* factors and their concomitants in the light of their specific characteristics, functions, manifestations, and proximate causes. He then defines all these states as "mentality" (*nāma*). He next discerns the physical basis for these mental phenomena, the matter of the heart (*hadayarūpa*),[1] as well as the remaining primary and secondary kinds of material phenomena. These he groups together under the heading of "materiality" (*rūpa*). He thus perceives the living being as a composite of mentality and materiality, *nāmarūpa*, without an over-ruling self hidden within or behind it.

The *vipassanāyānika* begins to purify his view by analyzing the body into the four primary elements – solidity, fluidity, heat, and oscillation. After defining these in terms of their characteristics, he repeats the procedure for the other material phenomena, defining them all as materiality. He then turns to the states of consciousness and their principal concomitants, defining them and grouping them under the heading of "mentality." Thus, like the first kind of yogin, he eventually arrives at the realization that the living being is merely a compound of mutually supporting mental and physical phenomena apart from which there is no separate entity to be identified as a "self," "being," or "person."

The process of analysis can be undertaken using as basis the five aggregates, the twelve sense bases (the six sense faculties including mind and their six respective objects), the eighteen elements (six objects, six faculties, and six consciousnesses), or any other mode of classification. In the end all are defined in terms of mentality and materiality, resulting in the removal of the view of a self-identical ego.

4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt (kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi)

Once the disciple has overcome the false view of a self by discerning the living being as a compound of material and mental phenomena, he next sets out to overcome doubts concerning this compound by investigating the causes and conditions for mentality-materiality. He understands that the mind-body combination is neither causeless nor created by any single cause but arises due to a multiplicity of causes and conditions. He first seeks out the causes and conditions for the body and discovers that the body is brought into being by four causes operating from the past – ignorance, craving, clinging, and *kamma* – and sustained in the present by nutriment as its primary present condition. He then turns his attention to mentality, and finds that all mental

1. The ancient Indian physiology, accepted by the Buddhist commentarial tradition, identified the heart with the seat of consciousness. In the canonical texts no such identification is made. Reference is only made to "that matter in dependence on which mind and mind-consciousness occur." See Narada, *Manual*., pp. 292-93.

phenomena come into being in dependence on conditions, such as sense organs, sense objects, and conascent mental factors, as well as through the defilements and *kamma* accumulated in the past. When he sees that the present occurrence of mentality-materiality is due to causes and conditions, he infers that the same principle applied to its occurrence in the past and will apply to its occurrence in the future. In this way he overcomes all doubt and uncertainty regarding the conditioned origination of mind and matter in the three periods of time.

By discerning the conditional basis for the mental-material compound, the yogin arrives at the realization that the course of existence is merely a succession of active *kammic* processes and passive resultant processes. The aggregates occurring in the past ceased immediately after arising but gave rise to aggregates occurring in the present. The aggregates occurring now will cease in the present and give rise to aggregates occurring in the future. There is nothing permanent passing through this succession. It is merely a sequence of phenomena acting and experiencing without an agent over and above the actions or a subject over and above the experiences.

5. Purification by Knowledge and Vision into the Right and Wrong Paths (maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi)

Before the next purification can arise several intermediate steps are necessary. Firstly, after dispelling his doubts by the knowledge of conditionality, the disciple undertakes the form of insight called "comprehension by groups" (*kalāpasammasana*). Comprehension by groups involves collecting all phenomena into distinct categories and defining them in terms of the three characteristics. Thus the disciple contemplates all material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness as impermanent, all as suffering, and all as not self, each being a separate comprehension.

As the Paṭisambhidāmagga states:

> Any materiality whatever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near – he defines all materiality as impermanent: this is one kind of comprehension. He defines it as painful: this is one kind of comprehension. He defines it as not self: this is one kind of comprehension. Any feeling whatever,… Any perception whatever,… Any formations whatever,… Any consciousness whatever,… – he defines all consciousness as impermanent:… He defines it as not self.[1]

This same method of comprehension can be applied not only to the five aggregates but to any categorical scheme for classifying the constituents of experience – the six sense doors, the six objects, the six kinds of consciousness, six contacts, six feelings, six

1. PP., 706. "Yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgata paccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbaṃ rūpaṃ aniccato vavattheti ekaṃ sammasanaṃ, dukkhato vavattheti ekaṃ sammasanaṃ, anattato vavattheti ekaṃ sammsanaṃ. Yā kañci vedanā… yā kañci sañña… ye keci saṅkhārā… yaṃ kiñci viññāṇaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbaṃ viññāṇaṃ aniccato vavattheti ekaṃ sammasanaṃ, dukkhato vavattheti, ekaṃ sammasanaṃ, anattato vavattheti, ekaṃ sammasanaṃ." Pts., p. 51.

perceptions, six volitions, the twelve sense bases, the eighteen elements, etc. The four *jhānas*, four divine abidings (*brahmavihāras*), and four immaterial attainments are also included. Since the text advises a beginner to develop comprehension by contemplating those states that are readily discernible by him, a *samathayānika* yogin will generally choose as his object of comprehension a *jhāna* he has achieved and mastered; this becomes his *sammasitajjhāna*, as we explained above.

Whatever objects he selects as material for comprehension, the disciple must understand the precise way they embody the three characteristics. Firstly, they are all impermanent in the sense that they are subject to destruction (*khayaṭṭhena*). Nothing that comes into being is able to last forever, but whatever arises is bound to eventually pass away. Secondly, they are all suffering in the sense of being fearful (*bhayaṭṭhena*). Since all composite phenomena are impermanent they cannot provide any lasting contentment or security, but when held to with clinging are a potential source of suffering to be regarded as harmful and fearful. And thirdly, they are all selfless in the sense of being coreless (*asāraṭṭhena*). Composite phenomena, being compounded by conditions, lack any inner essence that can be conceived as a self, inner agent or subject, and thus are empty of a core.[1]

When the meditator succeeds in comprehending the various groups in terms of the three characteristics, he acquires comprehension-knowledge, *sammasañāṇana*. This marks the actual beginning of insight. According to the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* comprehension knowledge is the first of the ten kinds of insight-knowledge through which a *vipassanā*-practitioner has to pass.[2]

From comprehension-knowledge the disciple passes on to knowledge of contemplation of rise and fall (*udayabbayānupassanāñāṇa*). This knowledge, defined simply as "understanding of contemplating present states, change,"[3] is gained by contemplating the presently existent five aggregates as characterized by rise and fall. In brief, it arises by seeing the rise of the aggregates in their characteristic of generation, birth, or arising, and their fall in their characteristic of change, destruction, or dissolution. In greater detail, it involves perceiving the arising of each aggregate through its specific conditions and its cessation through the cessation of these conditions. Focussing in more closely on the present process, the meditator realizes that present phenomena, not having been, are brought into being, and that having been they immediately vanish. Formations appear to him as instantaneous, coming into being and passing away with inconceivable rapidity, perpetually renewed.[4]

When he gains this initial understanding of rise and fall the meditator has arrived at tender insight (*taruṇavipassanā*). At this point, as a result of his successful practice, ten unprecedented experiences are likely to arise in him. Because they can impede his

1. PP., pp. 709-710. Vism., p. 523.

2. Narada, *Manual*., pp. 409, 411.

3. PP., p. 734. Pts., pp. 53-54.

4. PP., pp. 736-38. Vism., pp. 542-43.

progress, these are called the ten imperfections of insight (*vipasanūpakkilesā*). The ten are: illumination, knowledge, rapture, tranquility, happiness, resolution, exertion, mindfulness, equanimity, and attachment.[1] If he is not cautious the unwary meditator can misinterpret these occurrences and think that he has reached one of the stages of enlightenment. Therefore novice yogins are advised not to allow themselves to be deterred by such occurrences but to recognize them for what they are: by-products of insight which can become impediments if wrongly adhered to. The skilled meditator contemplates them as bare phenomena – impermanent, suffering, and selfless. He distinguishes the right path from the wrong, realizing that these ten states are not the path but distractions; insight-knowledge free from imperfections is the path. The knowledge that is established in him by making this distinction is the purification by knowledge and vision into the right and wrong paths.

6. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way (paṭipadāñāṇadassana visuddhi)

Having relinquished attachment to the ten imperfections of insight and correctly distinguished the true path from the false, the disciple now enters upon a steady progression of insights which will lead him through increasingly deeper levels of understanding right up to the threshold of the supramundane path. These insights, nine in number, begin with mature knowledge of rise and fall and culminate in conformity knowledge (*anulomañāṇa*), the pinnacle of mundane insight. Together with the previously accomplished comprehension-knowledge (*sammasanañāṇa*), these nine insights complete the ten kinds of insight-knowledge mentioned in the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*.

Knowledge of contemplation of rise and fall (*udayabbayānupassanā-ñāṇa*)

After distinguishing the right path from the wrong the meditator resumes the contemplation of rise and fall. Though he had previously cultivated this knowledge in part, his contemplation was disabled by the imperfections of insight and could not clearly observe the three characteristics. But now that the imperfections have been removed contemplation becomes extremely sharp, causing the three characteristics to stand out in bold relief. By attending to the rise and fall of formations the yogin sees the mark of impermanence – formations changing constantly at every moment, produced and stopped with inconceivable rapidity. As impermanence becomes more conspicuous suffering begins to stand out in its fundamental form, as continuous oppression by rise and fall. The yogin then realizes that whatever changes and causes suffering is insusceptible to the exercise of mastery, hence incapable of being identified as a self or the belongings of a self; this brings the understanding of the mark of selflessness into view. Having uncovered the three characteristics, the meditator sees that the so-called being is nothing but a becoming, a flux of evanescent, painful, impersonal happenings which does not remain the same for two consecutive moments.

---

1. PP., pp. 739ff. "Obhāsa, ñāṇa, pīti, passaddhi, sukha, adhimokkha, paggaha, upaṭṭhāna, upekkhā, nikanti." Vism., pp. 544-45.

Knowledge of contemplation of dissolution (*bhangānupassanā-ñāṇa*)

As the meditator persists in his contemplation of rise and fall, it becomes increasingly apparent that conditioned formations undergo three phases of becoming: a phase of arising (*uppāda*), a phase of presence (*ṭhiti*), and a phase of dissolution (*bhaṅga*). When he can discern these phases clearly, the yogin no longer extends his mindfulness to their arising or presence, but focusses exclusively upon the final phase – their momentary cessation, dissolution, or breaking up. He then sees how formations break up all the time "like fragile pottery being smashed, like fine dust being dispersed, like sesamum seeds being roasted."[1] Applying his direct knowledge of present dissolution to the past and future, he draws the inference that all past formations dissolved and all future ones will dissolve. Since dissolution is the culminating point of impermanence, the most salient aspect of suffering, and the strongest negation of selfhood, the three marks stand forth more distinctly than ever before. The whole field of formations thus becomes evident to contemplation as impermanent, suffering, and selfless. With the insight that formations break up constantly without a pause, and that this ceaseless process of momentary dissolution holds sway over the three periods of time, the meditator arrives at knowledge of contemplation of dissolution.

Knowledge of appearance as terror (*bhayatūpaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*)

As he repeats and cultivates his insight into the destruction, fall, and breakup of formations,

> formations classed according to all kinds of becoming, generation, destiny, station, or abode of beings, appear to him in the form of a great terror, as lions, tigers, leopards,… appear to a timid man who wants to live in peace.[2]

When he sees how past formations have ceased, present ones are ceasing, and future ones will cease, there arises in him knowledge of appearance as terror, born of the understanding that whatever is bound for destruction cannot be relied upon and is therefore fearful.

Knowledge of contemplation of danger (*ādīnavānupassanā-ñāṇa*)

The next stage of insight-knowledge arises naturally out of the previous one. As the meditator cultivates the knowledge of appearance as terror he finds that there is no shelter, protection, or refuge in any kind of becoming. He sees that since there is no shelter in any state of existence there is not a single formation he can pin his hopes on: all hold nothing but danger. Then "the three kinds of becoming appear like charcoal pits full of glowing coals,… and all formations appear as a huge mass of dangers destitute of satisfaction or substance."[3] The meditator discerns the potential danger in all existence

1. PP., p. 752. Vism., p. 553.

2. PP., p. 753. Vism., pp. 554-55.

3. PP., p. 755. Vism., p. 556.

just as a timid man sees the danger in a delightful forest thicket infested with wild beasts.[1]

The Paṭisambhidāmagga explains how the knowledge of appearance as terror (or the knowledge of the presence of fear) becomes the knowledge of danger thus:

> Birth is fear – thus understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Existence is fear… decay is fear… sickness is fear… death is fear… sorrow is fear… lamentation is fear… despair is fear, thus understanding in the presence of fear is knowledge of danger.[2]

Danger arises out of fearful conditions and fearful conditions give rise to danger. Birth, existence, decay, etc., being fearful states threaten danger to those exposed to them. For a meditator who perceives the dangers in all these fearful conditions, the knowledge of appearance as terror becomes transformed into the knowledge of contemplation of danger.

Knowledge of contemplation of dispassion (*nibbidānupassanā-ñāṇa*)

Seeing the danger in all compounded things the meditator becomes dispassionate towards them. He finds no delight in any state of worldly existence but turns away from them all. Even before he came to this knowledge the meditator had reduced his gross attachments but now, having seen the fear and danger in formations, he gains dispassion towards the five aggregates on account of their impermanent, fearful, and insecure nature. It should be noted that according to the Paṭisambhidāmagga these last three insights – knowledge of terror, of danger, and of dispassion – represent phases of one kind of insight-knowledge apprehending its object in three different ways.[3]

Knowledge of desire for deliverance (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*)

When the meditator becomes dispassionate towards the formations in all the kinds of becoming, his mind no longer cleaves to them. The desire then arises in him to get rid of formations, to be released and liberated from them all. The knowledge that arises in association with this desire is knowledge of desire for deliverance.

Knowledge of contemplation of reflection (*paṭisaṅkhānupassanā-ñāṇa*)

In order to be released from the whole field of conditioned phenomena the meditator returns to the contemplation of formations, examining them again and again in terms of impermanence, suffering and selflessness. Looking at them from a variety of angles in the light of the three characteristics, he sees formations as impermanent because they are non-continuous, temporary, limited by rise and fall, disintegrating, perishable, subject to change, etc.; as suffering because they are continuously oppressed, hard to bear, the basis of pain, a disease, a tumor, a dart, a calamity, an affliction, etc.; as not self because

---

1. *Ibid.*

2. BMTP., p. 377. "Uppādo bhayanti bhayatūpaṭṭhāne paññā ādīnave ñāṇaṃ. Pavattiṃ bhayanti… jarā bhayanti… byādhi bhayanti… maraṇaṃ bhayanti… soko bhayanti… paridevo bhayanti… upāyāso bhayanti, bhayatūpaṭṭhāne paññā ādīnave ñāṇaṃ." Pts., p. 377. SN. 4:173-75.

3. Pts., p. 259.

they are alien, empty, vain, void, ownerless, without an overlord, with none to wield power over them, etc.[1] This extended understanding of the three characteristics is the knowledge of contemplation of reflection.

Knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*)

To deepen his understanding of selflessness the meditator contemplates voidness (*suññatā*) in various ways. He sees that all compounds are empty of self or of anything belonging to a self, that nothing can be identified as "I" or as the property of an "I", as an "other" or as the property of an "other".[2] Perceiving the voidness of selfhood in formations, the meditator abandons both terror and attachment. He develops instead a sense of detached equanimity:

> This [meditator], wanting to get free from all formations, discerns formations by the contemplation of reflection; then, seeing nothing to be taken as 'I' or 'mine', he abandons both terror and delight and becomes indifferent and neutral towards all formations.[3]

With the arising of this knowledge the disciple's mind retreats, retracts, and recoils from all the planes of becoming and no longer goes out to them "just as a fowl's feather or a shred of sinew thrown on a fire retreats, retracts, and recoils, and does not spread out."[4] At this stage, if contemplation should perceive *nibbāna*, the meditator's goal, then it will reject formations and focus on *nibbāna*. But if it does not see *nibbāna* the meditator will continue in the knowledge of equanimity about formations until his contemplation acquires further maturity.

When the meditator's knowledge ripens and the move to the supramundane path becomes imminent, insight tends to settle down in one of the three contemplations – on impermanence, suffering, or selflessness – as determined by the meditator's disposition. Because they lead directly to the liberating experience of the noble path, these contemplations, at the pinnacle of insight, are called the three gateways to liberation (*tīṇi vimokkhamukhāni*). The contemplation of impermanence becomes the gateway to the signless liberation (*animitta vimokkha*) for it directs the mind to *nibbāna* as the signless element; the contemplation of suffering becomes the gateway to the desireless liberation (*appaṇihitavimokkha*) for it directs the mind to *nibbāna* as the desireless element; and the contemplation of non-self becomes the gateway to the void liberation (*suññatavimokkha*) for it directs the mind to *nibbāna* as the void element.

The liberation to which these contemplations are gateways is the supramundane path. Though one in essence the path gains three names according to the aspect of *nibbāna* it focusses upon. As Buddhaghosa explains:

1. PP., p. 760. Vism., p. 559.

2. PP., pp. 762-63. Vism., p. 561. SN. 3:167.

3. PP., p. 765. Vism., p. 563.

4. PP., p. 766. Vism., p. 564.

> And here the signless liberation should be understood as the noble path that has occurred by making nibbana its object through the signless aspect. For that path is signless owing to the signless element having arisen, and it is a liberation owing to deliverance from defilements. In the same way the path that has occurred by making nibbana its object through the desireless aspect is desireless. And the path that has occurred by making nibbana its object through the void aspect is void.[1]

The factor that determines which particular "gateway" will be entered and which liberation attained is the spiritual faculty predominant in the meditator's mental makeup. One with strong faith (*saddhā*) tends to settle down in contemplation of impermanence, one with strong concentration (*samādhi*) in the contemplation of suffering, and one with strong wisdom (*paññā*) in the contemplation of selflessness; thereby they each attain the path of liberation corresponding to their specific contemplation. As it is said in the Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> When one who has great resolution brings [formations] to mind as impermanent, he acquires the signless liberation. When one who has great tranquility brings [them] to mind as painful, he acquires the desireless liberation. When one who has great wisdom brings [them] to mind as not-self, he acquires the void liberation.[2]

Insight-knowledge that has reached its climax and is about to issue in the supramundane path is also known by another name, "insight leading to emergence" (*vuṭṭhānagāminī-vipassanā*).[3] This name covers three kinds of knowledge: fully matured equanimity about formations and the two that follow it – conformity knowledge (*anuloma ñāṇa*) and change-of-lineage knowledge (*gotrabhū ñāṇa*). The word "emergence" (*vuṭṭhāna*) signifies the supramundane path, which is called thus because externally it rises up from formations to apprehend *nibbāna* and internally it rises up from defilements and the aggregates consequent upon them to a state of complete purity. Since these last three kinds of mundane knowledge lead immediately to the path they are collectively named insight leading to emergence.

Conformity knowledge (*anuloma-ñāṇa*)

As the meditator cultivates equanimity about formations his faculties grow stronger and sharper. Then, at a certain point, the realization dawns that the path is about to arise. A thought-process of equanimity-knowledge occurs comprehending formations through one of the three characteristics – as either impermanent, or suffering, or selfless; the

---

1. PP., p. 768. "Ettha ca, animittavimokkho ti animittākārena nibbānaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā pavatto ariyamaggo. So hi animittāya dhātuyā uppannattā animitto, kilesehi ca vimuttattā vimokkho. Eten'eva nayena appaṇihitākārena nibbānaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā pavatto appaṇihito, suññatākārena nibbānaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā pavatto suññato ti veditabbo." Vism., p. 565.

2. PP., p. 768. "Aniccato manasikaronto adhimokkhabahulo animittavimokkhaṃ paṭilabhati. Dukkhato manasikaronto passaddhibahulo appaṇihitavimokkhaṃ paṭilabhati. Anattato manasikaronto vedabahulo suññatavimokkhaṃ paṭilabhati." Pts., p. 254.

3. PP., pp. 772-75. Vism., pp. 567-69.

mind then sinks into the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*). Following the life continuum there arises in the stream of consciousness a mind-door adverting (*manodvārāvajjana*) apprehending formations as impermanent, or suffering, or selfless, in accordance with the previous process of equanimity-knowledge. Immediately after the adverting two or three impulsions occur making formations their object in terms of the same characteristic. The three are individually called "preliminary work" (*parikamma*), "access" (*upacāra*), and "conformity" (*anuloma*), but they are most commonly collected under the group name "conformity." In very quick-witted meditators the moment of preliminary work is passed over and only the two moments of access and conformity occur. Conformity knowledge receives its name because it conforms to the functions of truth in the eight kinds of insight-knowledge preceding it and in the thirty-seven states partaking of enlightenment to follow.[1] It is the last moment of insight-knowledge before the change over to the supramundane path supervenes.

7. Purification by Knowledge and Vision (ñāṇadassanavisuddhi)

Change-of lineage (*gotrabhū*)

The last purification, purification by knowledge and vision, consists of the knowledge of the four supramundane paths – the path of stream-entry, the path of the once-returner, the path of the non-returner, and the path of arahatship. However, immediately after conformity knowledge and before the moment of the first path, there occurs one thought-moment called change-of-lineage knowledge (*gotrabhū-ñāṇa*). This knowledge has the function of adverting to the path. Because it occupies an intermediate position it belongs neither to purification by knowledge and vision of the way nor to purification by knowledge and vision, but is regarded as unassignable. It receives the name "change-of-lineage" because by reaching this stage of knowledge the meditator "passes out of the lineage, the category, the plane, of the ordinary man (*puthujjana*) and enters the lineage, the category, the plane, of the Noble Ones."[2] In bringing about such a radical transformation change-of-lineage is clearly a most important and crucial moment of spiritual development.

The three kinds of conformity knowledge – preliminary work, access, and conformity proper – dispel the "murk of defilements" that conceal the Four Noble Truths. Each of the three clears away a degree of delusion, permitting the truths to become more and more manifest. When the meditator reaches conformity knowledge nothing more needs to be done as preparation for the attainment of the first path. By arousing the insights ending in conformity he has completed whatever he had to do. At this point his mind no longer holds to any formation, but turns away from the entire field of formations as all conditioned phenomena appear to him to be impediments. However, though conformity-knowledge dispels the delusion that conceals the truths, it cannot penetrate the truths. For the truths to be penetrated *nibbāna* must be realized as object. Change-of-lineage

1. PP., pp. 782-83. Vism., pp. 575-76.

2. PP., p. 785. "Puthujjanagottaṃ puthujjanasaṅkhaṃ puthujjanabhūmiṃ atikkamamānaṃ, ariyagottaṃ ariyasaṅkhaṃ ariyabhūmiṃ okkamamānaṃ." Vism., p. 577.

knowledge, which arises right after conformity, is the first state of consciousness to make *nibbāna* its object. It is the initial advertance to *nibbāna*, functioning as the proximate, immediate and decisive-support condition for the arising of the first path.

The first path and fruit

Change-of-lineage knowledge perceives *nibbāna* but cannot destroy the defilements. The eradication of defilements is the work of the four supramundane paths (*lokuttaramagga*). Each path attainment is a momentary experience apprehending *nibbāna*, understanding the Four Noble Truths, and cutting off certain defilements. The first path, as Buddhaghosa explains, arises in immediate succession to change-of-lineage:

> …After, as it were, giving a sign to the path to come into being it [change-of-lineage] ceases. And without pausing after the sign given by that change-of-lineage knowledge the path follows upon it in uninterrupted continuity, and as it comes into being it pierces and explodes the mass of greed, the mass of hatred, and the mass of delusion, never pierced and exploded before.[1]

The first path is called the path of stream entry (*sotāpattimagga*) since the disciple who has reached this path has entered the stream of the Dhamma (*dhammasota*), the Noble Eightfold Path, which will take him to *nibbāna* as surely as the waters in a stream will be carried to the ocean.[2] On entering this path he has passed beyond the level of a worldling (*puthujjana*) and become a noble one, an ariyan, who has seen and understood the Dhamma for himself. The path gives him real experience of the seven noble treasures: faith, virtue, conscience, shame, learning, generosity, and wisdom.[3] With the attainment of the path he acquires the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, abandons the eightfold wrong path, and is on the way to becoming a breast-born son of the Buddha.[4]

As the passage cited above makes clear, when the path-knowledge arises it breaks through the mass of greed, hatred, and delusion, the root-defilements which drive living beings from birth to birth in beginningless *saṃsāra*. Each supramundane path has the special function of eradicating defilements. The defilements cut off by the successive paths are classified into a set of ten "fetters" (*saṃyojana*), so called because they keep beings chained to the round of existence. The ten fetters, which all arise out of the three unwholesome roots, are: [1] wrong views of personality (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), [2] doubt (*vicikicchā*), [3] clinging to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata parāmāsa*), [4] sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), [5] ill will (*vyāpāda*), [6] lust for fine material existence (*rūparāga*), [7]

---

1. PP., pp. 787-88. "…Evaṃ nibbattahi ti maggassa saññaṃ datvā viya nirujjhati. Maggo pi tena dinnasaññaṃ amuñcitvā va avīcisantativasena taṃ ñāṇaṃ anubandhamāno anibbiddhapubbaṃ apadālitapubbaṃ lobhakkhandhaṃ dosakkhandhaṃ mohakkhandhaṃ nibbijjhamāno vā padālayamāno vā nibbattati." Vism., p. 579.

2. SN. 5:347.

3. "Saddhā, sīla, hiri, ottappa, suta, cāga, paññā." DN. 3:251.

4. SN. 2:221.

lust for immaterial existence (*arūparāga*), [8] conceit (*māna*), [9] restlessness (*uddhacca*), and [10] ignorance (*avijjā*). The ten are divided into two groups: the first five are called the fetters pertaining to the lower worlds (*orambhāgiyāni samyojanāni*) because they keep beings tied to the sensuous realms; the last five are called the fetters pertaining to the higher worlds (*uddhambhāgiyāni samyojanāni*) because they remain operative even in the fine material and immaterial realms.[1] Some of these fetters – doubt, sensual desire, ill will, and restlessness – are identical in nature with the five hindrances abandoned by *jhāna*. But whereas mundane *jhāna* only suppresses the manifest eruptions of these defilements, leaving the latent tendencies untouched, the supramundane paths cut them off at the root. With attainment of the fourth path the last and subtlest of the fetters are eradicated. Thus the arahat, the fully liberated one, is described as "one who has eliminated the fetters of existence" (*parikkhīṇabhavasaṃyojana*).[2]

The path of stream-entry eradicates the first three fetters – the fetters of false views of personality, doubt, and clinging to rites and rituals. The first is the view that the five aggregates can be identified with a self or can be seen as containing, contained in, or belonging to a self.[3] The more theoretical forms of this view are attenuated by insight-knowledge into impermanence, suffering, and selflessness, but the subtle latent holding to such views can only be destroyed by path-knowledge. "Doubt" is uncertainty with regard to the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, and the training; it is eliminated when the disciple sees for himself the truth of the Dhamma.[4] "Clinging to rites and rituals" is the belief that liberation from suffering can be obtained merely by observing rites and rituals. Having followed the path to its climax, the disciple understands that the Noble Eightfold Path is the one way to the end of suffering, and so can no more fall back on rites and rituals. The path of stream entry not only cuts off these fetters but also eliminates greed for sense pleasures and resentment that would be strong enough to lead to states of loss, i.e. to rebirth in the four lower realms of the hells, tormented spirits, animals, and titans.[5] For this reason the stream-enterer is released from the possibility of an unfortunate rebirth.[6]

The path of stream-entry is followed by another occasion of supramundane experience called the fruit of stream entry (*sotāpatti-phala*). Fruition follows immediately upon the path, succeeding it without a gap. It occurs as the result of the path, sharing its object, *nibbāna*, and its world-transcending character. But whereas the path performs the active and demanding function of cutting off defilements, the fruit simply enjoys the bliss and peace that result from the path's completion of its function. Also, whereas the path is limited to only a single moment of consciousness, fruition covers either two or three

1. AN. 5:17.

2. MN. 1:4.

3. MN. 1:300.

4. MN. 1:101.

5. Dhs., p. 208.

6. PP., p. 801. Vism., p. 588.

moments. In the case of a quick-witted meditator who passes over the moment of preliminary work the cognitive process of the path contains only two moments of conformity knowledge. Thus in his thought-process, immediately after the path has arisen and ceased, three moments of fruition occur. In the case of an ordinary meditator there will be three moments of conformity knowledge and thus, after the path, only two moments of fruition.

The three moments of conformity knowledge and the moment of change-of-lineage are wholesome states of consciousness pertaining to the sense sphere (*kāmāvacarakusala-citta*). The path consciousness and the fruition that follows it are supramundane states of consciousness (*lokuttara citta*), the former wholesome (*kusala*) and the latter resultant (*vipāka*). The path and fruit necessarily occur at the level of one of the *jhānas* – from the first to the fourth *jhāna* in the fourfold scheme, from the first to the fifth in the fivefold scheme. They partake of the character of *jhāna* because they contain the *jhāna*-factors endowed with an intensity of absorption corresponding to that of the fine material sphere *jhānas*. But unlike the mundane *jhānas* these *jhānas* of the path and fruit are supramundane, having an altogether different object and function than their counterparts, as we will see in the next chapter.

The following diagram illustrates the thought-process of the path and fruit of stream-entry in the case of a normal meditator with three moments of conformity preceding the path and two moments of fruition succeeding it:

		A											B			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
bh	l	ch	d	p	u	a	g	m	ph	ph	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh	bh

Here line *A* represents the four thought-moments preceding the path process. This comprises the past *bhavaṅga* or life-continuum (*bh*), its vibration (*l*), its cutting off (*ch*), and the mind's advertance to formations as impermanent, suffering, or selfless through the mind-door (*d*). Line *B* represents the lapsing of the mind back into the passive life-continuum after the fruition phase is over. *P* represents the moment of preliminary work (*parikamma*), *u* the moment of access (*upacāra*), *a* the moment of conformity (*anuloma*), and *g* the moment of change-of-lineage (*gotrabhū*) where the ordinary stream of consciousness belonging to the sensual plane changes over to the lineage of the noble path. The following *m* represents the noble path consciousness (*magga citta*). After this there are two *ph*'s representing the fruit of stream-entry, then the mind relapses into the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) which is represented by *bh* repeated six times. The groups of three dots in each *citta* represent the birth (*uppāda*), transformation or duration (*ṭhiti*), and dissolution (*bhaṅga*) of each thought moment.[1]

It is evident from this diagram that the noble path consciousness is limited to only a single conscious moment. Immediately after this moment ceases it yields to its fruition moment. The diagram also shows the two distinct thought-moments of path and fruit

1. Adopted from *Nārada*, *Manual*., pp. 214-19. Vism., pp. 111-12. *Compendium*. pp. 54-55.

linked directly together for the reason that it is impossible to have the thought-moment of the stream-entry path without the fruit following in immediate succession. After two thought-moments of fruition the mental process returns to the life continuum.

After the attainment of fruition the stream-enterer reviews the path, fruition, and *nibbāna*. He will generally also review the defilements he has destroyed by the path and the defilements remaining to be destroyed by the higher paths; this, however, is not invariably fixed and is sometimes omitted by some meditators. The ariyan disciples who have passed through the next two fruitions will likewise review their attainments in the same way. Thus for each there will be at a minimum three and at a maximum five items to be reviewed.[1] For the arahat, however, there will be a maximum of four since he has no more defilements to be eliminated. In this way there are a maximum of nineteen kinds of reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa*) following the supramundane attainments.[2]

The disciple at the moment of the path of stream-entry is called "one standing on the path of stream-entry" or the first noble person; from the moment of fruition up to the attainment of the next path he is called a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), reckoned as the second noble person. Though conventionally the person standing on the path and the one abiding in the fruit can be described as one and the same individual at two different moments, the philosophical perspective requires another kind of descriptive device. From the standpoint of ultimate truth, according to Buddhism, an individual endures as such for only one thought-moment. Therefore, in classifying the types of noble persons, the Buddha drew upon the distinction between the thought-moments of path and fruition as the basis for a distinction between two types of noble persons. This bifurcation applies to each of the four stages of deliverance: for each, the individual at the path-moment is reckoned as one type of noble person, the same individual from the moment of fruition on as another type of noble person.

The texts extoll the stream-enterer as acquiring incalculable benefits as a result of his attainment. He has closed off the doors to rebirth in the woeful states of existence and can declare of himself:

> Destroyed for me is rebirth in the hells, in the animal kingdom, in the spirit realm, in the planes of misery, the bad destinations, the downfall. I am a stream-enterer, no longer subject to decline, assured of and destined for full enlightenment.[3] (Wr. tr.).

---

1. Nārada, *Manual*, p. 410. Vism., p. 581.

2. Anuruddha, *Abhidharmartha Saṅgrahaya*, Translated [into Sinhalese] by Sariputra Sangharāja Mahāthera. Revised and edited by the Very Rev. Pannamoli Tissa Thera. 2d ed. (Randombe, Ceylon: W. E. De Silva, Hetumuni Semaneris De Silva and R. C. P. Weerasuriya Waidyaratna, 1916), p. 249. Sumangala, [*Vibhāvani Ṭīkā*] *Anuruddhācariya's Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha with Abhidhammattha Vibhāvaniṭīkā*, revised and edited by Bhadanta Revatadhammatthera. [Pāli Text in Devanagari script]. (Vārānasi, India: Bauddha Svādhyāya Sātrā, 1965), pp. 157-58 (hereafter cited as *Vibhāvani Ṭīkā*).

3. "Khīṇanirayomhi khīṇatiracchānayoniyo khīṇapettivisayo khīṇāpāyaduggativinipāto; sotāpanno'haṃ asmi avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano." SN. 2:68.

He can be certain that he is released from five kinds of fear and hostility: the fear and hostility that come from taking life, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from taking intoxicants.[1] He is endowed with the four factors of stream-entry (*sotāpattiyaṅgāni*); unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and unblemished moral discipline.[2] He has penetrated and seen the truth with correct understanding.[3] By so penetrating the truth he has limited his future births to a maximum of seven in the happy realms of the human and heaven worlds, drying up the great ocean of suffering that laid beyond this.[4] Thus the Buddha says that for the stream-enterer who has seen the Dhamma the amount of suffering that remains is like a pinch of dust on the finger nail, while the suffering that has been exhausted is like the dust on the mighty earth.[5]

The second path and fruit

A disciple who has attained to stream-entry is not debarred from progressing to higher stages of deliverance in that same life, but can advance all the way to arahatship if he has sufficient supporting conditions and puts forth the necessary effort. Therefore the yogin abiding at the stage of stream-entry is advised to strive for the next higher path, the path of the once-returner (*sakadāgāmimagga*), either in the same session or at a later time. He should stir up the spiritual faculties, the powers, and the factors of enlightenment, and with this equipment contemplate the whole range of formations included in the five aggregates in the light of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. As before he again passes through the progressive series of insights beginning with knowledge of rise and fall and culminating in knowledge of equanimity about formations. If his faculties have not yet reached sufficient maturity his contemplation will remain in equanimity about formations. But if and when his faculties mature, he passes through the moments of conformity-knowledge and change-of-lineage knowledge and attains to the second noble path, the path of the once-returner.[6]

Unlike the other noble paths, the second path does not eradicate any fetters completely. However, when it arises it attenuates sensual desire and ill will to such a degree that they

1. *Ibid*. 69.

2. *Ibid*. 70

3. *Ibid*.

4. Stream-enterers are divided into three kinds: assuming that they will not go further in that same lifetime, one with sluggish faculties will be reborn seven times in the happy destinations; one with medium faculties will be reborn an intermediary number of times; and one with keen faculties will be reborn once more in the human world and there make an end of suffering. (See PP., pp. 833-34. Vism., pp. 611-12).

5. SN. 2:133-34.

6. The thought-moment immediately preceding the three higher paths only receives the name "change-of-lineage" figuratively, due to its similarity to the moment preceding the path of stream-entry. The yogi actually crossed over to the noble one's lineage (*ariyagotta*) earlier, with the moment before the first path. Hence the moment immediately preceding the three higher paths is technically known by another name, *vodāna*, meaning "cleansing", so called "because it purifies from certain defilements and because it makes absolute purification (i.e. *nibbāna*) its object." (Wr. tr.). "Ekaccasamkilesavisuddhiyā, pana accantavisuddhiyā ārammaṇakaraṇato ca vodānanti vuccati." Vism.T. 2:487-88.

no longer occur strongly or frequently but remain only as weak residues. The three unwholesome roots are weakened along with the other fetters derived from them. Following the path-consciousness in immediate succession come two or three moments of the fruit of the once-returner (*sakadāgāmi-phala*), the inevitable consequence of the path. After fruition reviewing knowledge occurs, as described. The meditator at the moment of the path is known as the third noble person, from the moment of the fruit on as a once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*), the fourth noble person. He is called a "once-returner" because, if he does not go further in this life, he is bound to make an end of suffering after returning to this world one more time. The standard sutta description reads:

> "After the vanishing of the (first) three fetters and the attenuation of greed, hate, and delusion, the monk 'returns only once more' to this world. And only once more returning to this world, he puts an end to suffering."[1]

The third path and fruit

As before, the ardent meditator resumes contemplation on the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of the aggregates, striving to attain the third stage of deliverance, the stage of a non-returner (*anāgāmi*). When his faculties mature he passes through the preliminary insights and reaches the third path, the path of the non-returner (*anāgāmimagga*). This path destroys sensual desire and ill will, the two fetters weakened by the second path. Immediately after the third path its fruition occurs, after which he reviews his position as before. At the moment of the path the yogin is known as one standing on the path of a non-returner, the fifth noble person, from the moment of fruition on as a non-returner, the sixth noble person. He is called a non-returner because he no longer returns to the sensuous realm. If he does not penetrate further he is reborn spontaneously in some higher realm, generally in the pure abodes (*suddhāvāsa*) of the fine material sphere, and there reaches final *nibbāna*: "After the vanishing of the five lower fetters, however, the monk appears in a higher world, and there he reaches *nibbāna*, 'no more returning' from that world.[2]

The fourth path and fruit

Again, either in the same session or at some future time, the meditator sharpens his faculties, powers, and enlightenment factors, contemplating the three characteristics of formations. He ascends through the series of insights up to equanimity about formations. When his faculties mature there arise in him conformity and change-of-lineage, followed by the fourth and final path, the path of arahatship (*arahattamagga*). This path eradicates the remaining five fetters – desire for existence in the fine material realm

---

1. Nyanatiloka, Comp., trans. and ed., *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity Being a Systematic Exposition in the Work of the Sutta Piṭaka*, (Colombo, Ceylon: The Bauddha Sahitya Sabha, 1952; rev. 3d ed. Colombo, Ceylon: The Bauddha Sahitya Sabha, 1969), p. 189 (hereafter cited as *Path to Deliverance*). "… Bhikkhu tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā - rāgadosamohānaṃ tanuttā sakadāgāmi hoti sakid eva imaṃ lokaṃ āgantvā dukkhass'antaṃ karoti." AN. 2:238.

2. *Path to Deliverance*. p. 189. "… Bhikkhu pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tatthaparinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā." AN. 2:238.

(*rūparāga*), desire for existence in the immaterial realm (*arūparāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), and ignorance (*avijjā*). The fourth path is followed immediately by its fruition, the fruit of arahatship (*arahatta-phala*), after which reviewing knowledge occurs. The text reads:

> But after the vanishing of all biases [ten fetters] he reaches already in this world, the liberation of mind and the liberation through wisdom, after realizing and understanding it in his own person.[1]

At the moment of the path the yogin is reckoned as one standing on the path of arahatship, the seventh noble person; at the moment of fruition he becomes an arahat, the eighth noble person. At this point he has completed the development of the path and reached the goal of full liberation.

> He is one of the Great Ones with cankers destroyed, he bears his last body, he has laid down the burden, reached his goal and destroyed the fetter of becoming, he is rightly liberated with [final] knowledge and worthy of the highest offerings of the world with its deities.[2]

The eight individuals, from the person standing on the path of stream-entry to the arahat, make up the ariyan Sangha, the community of noble persons forming the third refuge and third jewel of Buddhist veneration. As the Buddha says:

> Bhikkhus, there are these eight persons worthy of offerings and hospitality, of gifts and homage, an incomparable field of merit to the world.
>
> The stream-enterer, he who has entered the path to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry, the once-returner, he who has entered the path to the realization of the fruit of once-returner, the non-returner, he who has entered the path to the realization of the fruit of non-returner, the arahat, and he who has entered the path to arahatship.[3] (Wr. tr.).

---

1. *Path to Deliverance*. p. 189. "… Bhikkhu āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭh'eva dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati." AN. 2:238.

2. PP., p. 792. "mahākhīṇasavo antimadehadāri ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parīkkhiṇabhavasaṃyojano sammaññāvimutto sadevakassa lokassa aggadakkhiṇeyyoti." Vism., p. 582.

3. "Aṭṭh'ime bhikkhave puggalā āhuneyyā, pāhuneyyā, dakkhineyyā, añjalikaranīyā anuttaraṃ puñña-kkhettaṃ lokassa.

Sotāpanno sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno, sakadāgāmi sakadāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno, anāgāmi anāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno, arahā arahattāya paṭipanno." AN. 4:292-93.

Chapter Eight

JHĀNA AND THE NOBLE ATTAINMENTS

In the last chapter we followed the progressive unfolding of the path of wisdom culminating in full liberation. This path took us through the supramundane attainments of the four paths and fruits by which the defilements are destroyed and deliverance from suffering is achieved. In the course of our discussion we mentioned that the path and fruits always occur as occasions of *jhāna*. In the present chapter we will explore more fully these supramundane *jhānas*, examining them in their own nature, in relation to their mundane counterparts, and in the context of the cognitive processes to which they belong. Then we will consider two special achievements in the meditative field accessible only to particular types of noble persons – the attainment of fruition (*phalasamāpatti*) and the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*). This will be followed by an overview of the Theravāda Buddhist typology of noble persons, presented from the standpoint of determining their relation to the mundane accomplishment of *jhāna*. This overview will enable us to assess, in the last section of this chapter, the place of *jhāna* in the life of the arahat, the spiritually perfected man in Theravāda Buddhism.

Supramundane Jhāna

The supramundane paths and fruits, as we saw, always arise as states of *jhānic* consciousness. They occur as states of *jhāna* because they contain within themselves the factors of *jhāna* (*jhānaṅga*) elevated to a level of intensity corresponding to that of the factors in the mundane *jhānas*. Since they possess the *jhāna*-factors endowed with such intensity these states are able to fix upon their object with the force of full absorption. Thence, taking the absorptive force of the *jhāna* factors as the criterion, the paths and fruits may be reckoned as belonging to either the first, second, third or fourth *jhāna* of the fourfold scheme, or to the first, second, third, fourth or fifth *jhāna* of the fivefold scheme.

Though a fully explicit recognition of the supramundane *jhānic* character of the paths and fruits first comes out in the Abhidhammapiṭaka, the basis for this recognition goes back to the suttas. In the section of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, "the Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness" (DN. No. 22), where the Buddha defines each factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*), the eighth factor, is defined by the standard formula for the four *jhānas*:

> And what, bhikkhus, is right concentration? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu, quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states of mind, enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought with rapture and happiness born of seclusion.

> With the subsiding of applied thought and sustained thought he enters and dwells in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without applied thought and sustained thought, and is filled with rapture and happiness born of concentration.
>
> With the fading away of rapture, he dwells in equanimity, mindful and discerning; and he experiences in his own person that happiness of which the noble ones say: 'Happily lives he who is equanimous and mindful' – thus he enters and dwells in the third *jhāna*.
>
> With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters and dwells in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.
>
> This, bhikkhus, is right concentration.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Right concentration, however, can be either mundane or supramundane. That the right concentration here defined as the four *jhānas* is supramundane becomes clear from the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN. No. 117), a discourse exploring the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. In this discourse, rather than presenting the path in its own name, the Buddha discusses it under the name of "noble right concentration with its supports and accompaniments." He begins by asking the monks: "What, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports and accompaniments?" The answer he gives himself:

> There are right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness. The one-pointedness of mind accompanied by these seven factors – this is noble right concentration with its supports and accompaniments.[2] (Wr. tr.).

Each of the path factors in turn is said to have two forms, a mundane form which is "subject to the cankers, pertaining to the side of merit, maturing in the foundations of existence,"[3] (Wr. tr.), and another form which is "noble, free from cankers, supramundane, a factor of the path."[4] (Wr. tr.). The latter is found in "the noble state of consciousness, the cankerless state of consciousness, in one equipped with the noble path, in one developing the noble path."[5] (Wr. tr.). Since these factors accompanying right concentration of the noble path are defined as supramundane, it follows that the four *jhānas* making up right concentration in the Noble Eightfold Path are also supramundane.

---

1. DN. 2:313.

2. "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi sa-upaniso saparikkhāro? Seyyathīdaṃ: sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṃkappo sammāvācā sammākamanto sammā-ājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati. Yā kho, bhikkhave, imehi sattaṅgehi cittassa ekaggatā parikkhātā; ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo sammā samādhi sa-upaniso iti pi, saparikkhāro iti pi." MN. 3:71.

3. "Sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā." MN. 3:72.

4. "Ariyā anāsavā lokuttara maggaṅgā." *Ibid.*

5. "Ariya cittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato." *Ibid.*

In the Abhidhamma system of explanation this connection between the *jhānas*, paths, and fruits comes to be worked out with great intricacy of detail. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi, in its section on states of consciousness, expounds each of the path and fruition states of consciousness as occasions, first, of one or another of the four *jhānas* in the tetradic scheme, and then again as occasions of one or another of the five *jhānas* in the pentadic scheme.[1] Standard Abhidhammic exposition, as formalized in the synoptical manuals of Abhidhamma, employs the fivefold scheme and brings each of the paths and fruits into connection with each of the five *jhānas*. In this way the eight types of supramundane consciousness – the path and fruition consciousness of stream-entry, the once-returner, the non-returner, and arahatship – proliferate to forty types of supramundane consciousness, since any path or fruit can occur at the level of any of the five *jhānas*. This procedure is elaborated in the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*:

> The First Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
>
> The Second Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
>
> The Third Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
>
> The Fourth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness,
>
> The Fifth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.
>
> So are the Sakadāgāmi Path-consciousness, Anāgāmi Path-consciousness, and Arahatta Path-consciousness, making exactly twenty classes of consciousness. Similarly there are twenty classes of Fruit-consciousness. Thus there are forty types of supramundane consciousness.[2]

The medieval Ceylonese commentator Sāriputta glosses this passage thus: "Stream-entry path-consciousness accompanied by the five-factored first *jhāna* with initial thought, etc. is called 'the first *jhāna sotāpatti* path-consciousness'."[3] (Wr. tr.). And so for the rest.

---

1. Dhs., pp. 74-86.

2. Nārada, *Manual.*, pp. 63-64. "Vitakka-vicāra-pīti-sukh'ekaggatā-sahitaṃ Paṭhamajjhāna-Sotāpattimaggacittaṃ,

Vicāra-pīti-sukh'ekaggatā-sahitaṃ Dutiyajjhāna-Sotāpattimaggacittaṃ,

Pīti-sukh'ekaggatā-sahitaṃ Tatiyajjhāna Sotāpattimaggacittaṃ,

Sukh'ekaggatā-sahitaṃ Catutthajjhāna Sotāpattimaggacittaṃ.

Upekkh'ekaggatā-sahitaṃ Pañcamajjhāna Sotāpattimaggacittaṃ c'ati.

…Tathā Sakadāgāmimagga, Anāgāmimagga, Arahattamaggacittañ c'āti, samavīsati maggacittāni. Tathā phalacittāni c'ati samacattāḷīsa lokuttaracittāni bhavantī'ti." *Ibid*, pp. 62-63.

3. Paṭhamajjhānena vitakkādipañcaṅgikajjhānena sampayuttaṃ sotāpattimaggacittaṃ paṭhamajjhāna-sotāpattimaggacittaṃ." AS., p. 37. *Vibhāvanī Ṭīkā*, pp. 36f. Dhs.A., pp. 272-73.

It should be noted that there are no paths and fruits conjoined with the immaterial attainments (*āruppas*). The reason for this omission is that supramundane *jhāna* is presented solely from the standpoint of its factorial constitution, and the formless attainments have the same factors as the fifth *jhāna* – equanimity and one-pointedness. They differ only in regard to the object, a consideration here irrelevant since the paths and fruits all take *nibbāna* as their object.

The fullest treatment of the supramundane *jhānas* in the authoritative Pāli literature can be found in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi's exposition of the supramundane states of consciousness, read in conjunction with the commentary on these passages in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā*. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi opens its analysis of the first wholesome supramundane consciousness with the words:

> On the occasion when one develops supramundane *jhāna* which is emancipating, leading to the demolition (of existence), for the abandonment of views, for reaching the first plane, secluded from sense pleasures... one enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*.[1] (Wr. tr.).

It then goes on to enumerate the various wholesome mental phenomena present on the occasion of that consciousness, defining each of these by their standard synonyms. We will consider the most significant auxiliary constituents of the supramundane *jhānas* shortly, but first it is instructive to look at the introductory phrase itself in the light of its commentarial elucidation.

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* explains the word *lokuttara*, which we have been translating "supramundane," as meaning "it crosses over the world, it transcends the world, it stands having surmounted and overcome the world."[2] (Wr. tr.). It glosses the phrases "one develops *jhāna*" thus: "One develops, produces, cultivates absorption *jhāna* lasting for a single thought-moment."[3] (Wr. tr.). This gloss shows us two things about the consciousness of the path: first that it occurs as a *jhāna* at the level of full absorption, and second that this absorption of the path lasts for only a single thought-moment. The word "emancipating" (*niyyānika*) is explained to mean that this *jhāna* goes out (*niyyāti*) from the world, from the round of existence, the phrase "leading to demolition" (*apacayagāmi*) that it demolishes and dismantles the process of rebirth.[4]

This last phrase points to a striking difference between mundane and supramundane *jhāna*. The Dhammasaṅgaṇi's exposition of the former begins: "On the occasion when one develops the path for rebirth in the fine material sphere... one enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*."[5] (Wr. tr.). Thus, with this statement, mundane *jhāna* is shown as

---

1. "Yasmiṃ samaye lokuttaraṃ jhānaṃ bhāveti niyyānikaṃ apacayagāmiṃ diṭṭhigatānaṃ pahānāya paṭhamāya bhūmiyā pattiyā vivicceva kāmehi… paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." Dhs., p. 72.

2. "Lokaṃ taratīti lokuttaraṃ, lokaṃ uttaratīti lokuttaraṃ, lokaṃ samatikkamma abhibhuyya tiṭṭhatīti lokuttaraṃ." Dhs.A., p. 259.

3. "Jhānam bhāvetīti ekacittakkhaṇikaṃ appanājhānaṃ bhāveti janeti vaḍḍheti." *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. "Yasmiṃ samaye rūpūpapattiyā maggaṃ bhāveti vivicceva kāmehi… paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati." Dhs., p. 44.

sustaining the round of rebirths; it is a wholesome *kamma* leading to renewed existence. But the supramundane *jhāna* of the path does not promote the accumulation of the round; to the contrary, it brings about the round's dismantling and demolition. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* underscores this difference with an illustrative simile:

> The wholesome states of the three planes are said to lead to accumulation because they build up and increase death and rebirth in the round. But not this. Just as when one man has built up a wall eighteen feet high another might take a club and go along demolishing it, so this goes along demolishing and dismantling the deaths and rebirths built up by the wholesome *kammas* of the three planes by bringing about a deficiency in their conditions. Thus it leads to demolition.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The *jhāna* is said to be cultivated "for the abandoning of views." This phrase signifies the function of the first path, which is to eradicate the fetters. The supramundane *jhāna* of the first path cuts off the fetter of personality view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) and all speculative views derived from it. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* points out that here we should understand that it abandons not only wrong views but other unwholesome states as well, namely doubt, clinging to rites and rituals, and greed, hatred, and delusion strong enough to lead to the plane of misery. The phrase "for reaching the first plane" the commentary explicates as meaning for attaining the fruit of stream entry.[2]

Immediately after this passage the Dhammasaṅgaṇi lists the constituting phenomena comprised in the supramundane *jhāna*, followed by their definitions. The elaborate and complex expository method of the canonical Abhidhamma word has been streamlined in the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*. By avoiding repetitions of the same factor under different headings the manual assigns thirty-eight mental factors (*cetasikas*) to the first *jhāna* state of consciousness, whether of any of the four paths and fruits. These are the seven factors common to all states of consciousness, the six general variables, the nineteen universal beautiful factors, wisdom, and three abstinences – right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Two immeasurables – compassion and sympathetic joy – are always excluded from the paths and fruits.[3]

We saw earlier that the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* attributes thirty-five possible mental factors to the first mundane *jhāna*.[4] This invites a comparison between the composition of the two states. Firstly it will be noticed that compassion and sympathetic joy can be present in mundane *jhāna* but not in the supramundane. The reason is that those mental

---

1. "Yathā ca pana tebhūmakakusalaṃ vattasmiṃ cutipaṭisandhiyo ācināti vaḍḍhetīti ācayagāmi nāma hoti. Na tathā idaṃ. Idaṃ pana yathā ekasmiṃ purise aṭṭhārasahatthā pākārā cinante aparo mahamuggaraṃ gahetvā tena citacitaṭṭhānaṃ apacinanto vidhaṃsento eva gaccheyya. Evameva tebhūmakakusalena cita cutipaṭisandhiyo paccayavekallākārena apacinantaṃ vidhaṃsentaṃ gacchatīti apacayagāmi." Dhs.A., p. 259.

2. Dhs.A., pp. 259-60.

3. Nārada, *Manual*., pp. 127-29. NB: The higher *jhānas* have respectively thirty-seven, thirty-six, and thirty-five components as applied thought, sustained thought, and rapture are abandoned at these levels.

4. See above, Chapter IV, pp. 149-50.

factors have sentient beings for object, while the paths and fruits objectify *nibbāna*.[1] Secondly we should note that the three abstinences are present in the supramundane *jhānas* but not in the mundane. This is because in mundane consciousness an abstinence (*virati*) is only present on an occasion when one is deliberately exercising restraint of speech, body, or livelihood. In mundane *jhāna* no such restraint is being applied; it is only applied in wholesome sense sphere consciousness when one is resisting the impulse towards moral transgression. Even then only one abstinence can occur at a time, and only with respect to one violation covered by the abstinence – for right speech abstaining from lying, slander, harsh speech, *or* idle chatter; for right action abstaining from killing, stealing, *or* sexual misconduct; for right livelihood abstaining from one *or* another form of wrong livelihood. But in the supramundane states the three abstinences occur simultaneously, and they occur with respect to all the violations covered by the abstinence. In the supramundane *jhānas* of the path they have the function not merely of inhibiting immoral actions, but of destroying the tendencies for these transgressions to occur. For this reason the Dhammasaṅgaṇi describes each abstinence as *setughāta*, "breaking the bridge," which the commentary explains as meaning that the abstinence uproots the condition for misconduct of speech, action or livelihood.[2]

In the Dhammasaṅgaṇi's enumeration of states, the factor of wisdom enters into the supramundane *jhānas* as three new faculties spread out over the four paths and fruits. These three are the faculty of "I shall know the unknown" (*anaññātaññassāmitindriya*), the faculty of final knowledge (*aññindriya*), and the faculty of the completion of final knowledge (*aññātavindriya*).[3] The first is present in the first path, the second in the six intermediate states from the first fruition through the fourth path, and the third in the fourth fruition, the fruit of arahatship. The faculty of "I shall know the unknown" is the wisdom-faculty of one standing on the path of stream-entry, the "unknown" being, according to the commentary, the deathless state of *nibbāna* or the Four Noble Truths, neither of which has been known before in beginningless *saṃsāra*.[4] The faculty of final knowledge is the same faculty of wisdom in those at the intermediate stages of progress, while the faculty of the completion of final knowledge is the fully matured wisdom of the arahat. None of these faculties is present in mundane *jhāna*.

A good number of constituent factors present in mundane *jhāna* are repeated again in the analysis of supramundane *jhāna*, but to these the Dhammasaṅgaṇi adds two qualifying phrases not given in the definitions of their mundane counterparts. These are the phrases "path factor" (*maggaṅga*) and "enlightenment factor" (*bojjhaṅga*). The former attaches to all those states which, under one or another of their different names, enter into the Noble Eightfold Path as right view, right intention, right speech, right

---

1. The other two immeasurables – loving kindness and equanimity – are particular modes of the mental factors "non-hatred" and "specific neutrality." Since their parent factors do not necessarily have sentient beings for object they can be present even with other objects and are, in fact, universal concomitants of wholesome states of consciousness.

2. Dhs.A., p. 264.

3. Dhs., pp. 77, 91, 138.

4. Dhs.A., p. 261.

action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.[1] Though five of these states – right view, right intention, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration – are present in mundane *jhāna*, they are not present as path factors (*maggaṅga*) for on those occasions they do not pertain to the noble path leading directly to the cessation of suffering.

The phrase "enlightenment factor" attaches to the states belonging to the seven factors of enlightenment: mindfulness, investigation of phenomena, energy, rapture, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. This collection of states is called "enlightenment" or "awakening" (*bodhi*) because, when it arises at the moment of the supramundane paths, it enables the noble disciple to awaken from the sleep of the defilements.[2] Its components can be present in the mundane *jhānas* but they are not present there as enlightenment factors. They function as enlightenment factors only in the supramundane *jhānas* of the noble paths and fruits, for only then do they contribute immediately to the attainment of enlightenment.

Besides these several other differences between mundane and supramundane *jhāna* may be briefly noted. Firstly, with regard to their objects, the mundane *jhānas* have a conceptual entity (*paññatti*) as object; for the *kasiṇas*, impurities, mindfulness of breathing, etc. the object is the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*), for the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) it is sentient beings. In contrast, for the supramundane *jhāna* of the paths and fruits the object is exclusively *nibbāna*, a truly existent state (*sabhāva-dhamma*).

With regard to their predominant tone, in mundane *jhāna* the element of serenity (*samatha*) prevails. Though the factor of wisdom enters into the mundane *jhānas* it does not do so with any special prominence. In contrast, the supramundane *jhāna* of the paths and fruits brings serenity and insight into balance. Wisdom is present as right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) and serenity as right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*). Both function together in perfect harmony. As the *Visuddhimagga* explains, paraphrasing a passage from the Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> At the time of developing the eight mundane attainments the serenity power is in excess, while at the time of developing the contemplations of impermanence, etc., the insight power is in excess. But at the noble path moment they occur coupled together in the sense that neither one exceeds the other.[3]

---

1. It should be noted that in the paths and fruits occurring at the level of the second through fifth *jhānas*, only seven path factors are present. This is because right intention (*sammāsaṃkappa*) is a form of *vitakka*, which is made to subside with the attainment of the second *jhāna*. Similarly, in the paths and fruits of the fourth and fifth *jhānic* levels only six enlightenment factors are present, rapture having been abandoned with the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* of the fivefold system.

2. See Dhs.A., p. 262.

3. PP., p. 798. "Lokiyānañ ca aṭṭhannaṃ samāpattīnaṃ bhāvanākāle samathabalaṃ adhikaṃ hoti; aniccānupassanādīnaṃ bhāvanākāle vipassanābalaṃ. Ariyamaggakhaṇe pana yuganaddhā te dhammā pavattanti aññamaññaṃ anativattanaṭṭhena." Vism., p. 586.

This difference in prevailing tone leads into a difference in function or activity between the two kinds of *jhāna*. Both the mundane and supramundane are *jhānas* in the sense of closely attending (*upanijjhāna*) but in the case of mundane *jhāna* this close attention issues merely in an absorption into the object, an absorption that can only suppress the defilements temporarily. In the supramundane *jhāna*, particularly of the four paths, the coupling of close attention with wisdom brings the exercise of four functions at a single moment. These four functions each apply to one of the Four Noble Truths, representing the particular way that noble truth is penetrated at the time the paths arise comprehending the truths. The four functions are full understanding (*pariññā*), abandonment (*pahāna*), realization (*sacchikiriya*), and development (*bhāvanā*). The path penetrates the first noble truth by fully understanding suffering; it penetrates the second noble truth by abandoning craving, the origin of suffering; it penetrates the third noble truth by realizing *nibbāna*, the cessation of suffering; and it penetrates the fourth noble truth by developing the Noble Eightfold Path, the way to the end of suffering. The *Visuddhimagga* quotes a passage from the ancients to clear away doubts that one experience can perform four functions simultaneously:

> For this is said by the Ancients 'just as a lamp performs four functions simultaneously in a single moment – it burns the wick, dispels darkness, makes light appear, and uses up the oil – so too, path knowledge penetrates to the four truths simultaneously in a single moment – it penetrates to suffering by penetrating to it with full-understanding, penetrates to origination by penetrating to it with abandoning, penetrates to the path by penetrating to it with developing and penetrates to cessation by penetrating to it with realizing. What is meant? By making cessation its object it reaches, sees and pierces the four truths.[1]

Filling in the simile, Buddhaghosa explains that as the lamp burns the wick the path knowledge understands suffering; as the lamp dispels darkness the path abandons craving; as the lamp makes light appear the path develops the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path; and as the lamp consumes the oil, the path realizes *nibbāna*, which destroys the defilements.[2] Though this fourfold function is peculiar to the path-consciousness and is not fully shared by fruition, the latter still exercises a decisively cognitive function in that it is said to "closely attend to the real characteristic, the truth of cessation."[3] (Wr. tr.).

---

1. PP., p. 808. "Vuttaṃ h'etaṃ porāṇehi: 'Yathā padīpo apubbaṃ acarimaṃ ekakkhaṇena cattāri kiccāni karoti, vaṭṭiṃ jhāpeti, andhakāraṃ vidhamati, ālokaṃ pavidaṃseti, sinehaṃ pariyādiyati, evaṃ eva maggañāṇaṃ apubbaṃ acarimaṃ ekakkhaṇena cattāri saccāni abhisameti, dukkhaṃ pariññābhisamayena abhisameti, samudayaṃ pahānābhisamayena abhisameti, maggaṃ bhāvanābhisamayena abhisameti, nirodhaṃ sacchikiriyābhisamayena abhisameti. Kiṃ vuttaṃ hoti? Nirodhaṃ ārammaṇaṃ karitvā cattāri pi saccāni pāpuṇāti passati paṭivijjhatī ti.' " Vism., p. 593.

2. PP., p. 809. Vism., p. 593.

3. "Phalaṃ pana nirodhasaccaṃ tathalakkhaṇaṃ upanijjhāyati." Dhs.A., p. 211.

The Jhānic Level of the Path and Fruit

When the paths and fruits are assigned to the level of the four or five *jhānas*, the question arises as to what factor determines their particular level of *jhānic* intensity. In other words, why do the path and fruit arise for one yogin at the level of the first *jhāna*, for another at the level of the second *jhāna* and so forth? The *Visuddhimagga* and the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* deal with this issue in almost identical ways, discussing it in terms of the question as to what governs the difference in the number of the noble path's enlightenment factors (*bojjhaṅga*), path factors, (*maggaṅga*) and *jhāna* factors (*jhānaṅga*).[1]

Both texts present three theories concerning the determinant of the *jhānic* level of the path. These theories were apparently formulated by ancient commentators and handed down in succession through their lineages of pupils. The first, ascribed to the Elder Tipiṭaka Cūla Nāga, holds that it is the basic *jhāna* (*pādakajjhāna*), i.e. the *jhāna* used as a basis for the insight leading to emergence in immediate proximity to the path, that governs the difference in the *jhānic* level of the path. A second theory, ascribed to the Elder Mahā Datta of Moravāpi, says that the difference is governed by the aggregates made the objects of insight (*vipassanāya ārammaṇabhūtā khandhā*) on the occasion of insight leading to emergence. A third theory, ascribed to the Elder Tipiṭaka Cūla Abhaya, holds that it is the personal inclination (*puggalajjhāsaya*) of the meditator that governs the difference.

According to the first theory, the path arisen in a dry insight meditator (*sukkhavi-passaka*) who lacks *jhāna*, and the path arisen in one who possesses a *jhāna* attainment but does not use it as a basis for insight, and the path arisen by comprehending formations after emerging from the first *jhāna*, are all paths of the first *jhāna* only. They all have eight path factors, seven enlightenment factors, and five *jhāna* factors. When the path is produced after emerging from the second, third, fourth, and fifth *jhānas*, and using these as the basis for insight, then the path pertains to the level of the *jhāna* used as a basis – the second, third, fourth or fifth. The path will have respectively, four, three, two, and again two *jhāna* factors. However, these paths will possess only seven path factors, since "right intention" (*sammāsaṃkappa*), as a mode of applied thought (*vitakka*), has been eliminated in the second and higher *jhānas*. Those paths associated with the fourth and fifth *jhāna* will also lack the enlightenment factor of rapture (*pītisambojjhanga*), and thus have only six enlightenment factors. For a meditator using an immaterial *jhāna* as basis the path will be a fifth *jhāna* path.

Thus in this first theory, when formations are comprehended by insight after emerging from a basic *jhāna*, then it is the *jhāna* attainment emerged from at the point nearest to the path, i.e. just before insight leading to emergence is reached, that makes the path similar in nature to itself.[2]

1. PP., pp. 778-80. Vism., pp. 572-73. Dhs.A., pp. 271-74. *Expositor*, 2:307-308.

2. PP., p. 779. Vism., p. 573. Dhs.A., p. 272. *Expositor*, 2:307-308.

According to the second theory the path that arises is similar in nature to the states which are being comprehended with insight at the time insight leading to emergence occurs. Thus if the meditator, after emerging from a meditative attainment, is comprehending with insight sense sphere phenomena or the constituents of the first *jhāna*, then the path produced will occur at the level of that *jhāna*.[1] On this theory, then, it is the comprehended *jhāna* (*sammasitajjhāna*) that determines the *jhānic* quality of the path. The one qualification that must be added is that a yogin cannot contemplate with insight a *jhāna* higher than he is capable of attaining.

According to the third theory, the path occurs at the level of whichever *jhāna* the meditator wishes – either at the level of the *jhāna* he has used as the basis for insight or at the level of that *jhāna* he has made the object of insight-comprehension. In other words, the *jhānic* quality of the path accords with his personal inclination. However, mere wish alone is not sufficient. For the path to occur at the *jhānic* level wished for, the mundane *jhāna* must have been either made the basis for insight or used as the object of insight-comprehension.[2]

The difference between the three theories can be understood through a simple example.[3] If a meditator reaches the supramundane path by contemplating with insight the first *jhāna* after emerging from the fifth *jhāna*, then according to the first theory his path will belong to the fifth *jhāna*, while according to the second theory it will belong to the first *jhāna*. Thus these two theories are incompatible when a difference obtains between basic *jhāna* and comprehended *jhāna*. But according to the third theory, the path becomes of whichever *jhāna* the meditator wishes, either the first or the fifth. Thus this doctrine does not necessarily clash with the other two.

Buddhaghosa himself does not make a decision among these three theories. He only points out that in all three doctrines, beneath their disagreements, there is the recognition that the insight leading to emergence determines the *jhānic* character of the path. For this insight is the proximate and principal cause for the arising of the path, so whether it be the insight leading to emergence near the basic *jhāna* or that occurring through the contemplated *jhāna* or that fixed by the meditator's wish, it is in all cases this final phase of insight that gives definition to the supramundane path, fixing its path factors and *jhāna* factors.[4] Since fruition that occurs immediately after the path has an identical constitution to the path, its own supramundane *jhāna* is determined by the path. Thus a first *jhāna* path produces a first *jhāna* fruit, and so on for the remaining *jhānas*.

1. PP., p. 779. Vism., p. 573. Dhs.A., pp. 272-73. *Expositor*, 2:308.

2. PP., p. 780. Vism., p. 574. Dhs.A., p. 273.

3. Dhs.A., p. 274. *Expositor*, 2:310.

4. PP., pp. 778-79. Vism. p. 573.

Two Attainments of the Noble Ones

The Theravāda tradition recognizes two special meditative attainments which are open only to particular types of noble persons (*ariyapuggala*). These two are the attainment of fruition (*phalasamāpatti*) and the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*). The former is a *jhāna* proper of the supramundane class; the latter, though not a *jhāna*, still demands complete mastery over the mundane *jhānas* as a prerequisite for its achievement. We will now consider each of these attainments in turn.

The Attainment of Fruition

The fruition consciousness (*phalacitta*) is a supramundane state of consciousness classed as a resultant (*vipāka*) because it is produced by the corresponding path consciousness. Like the path consciousness, which it resembles almost exactly in content, fruition is a *jhāna* operating at the *jhānic* level of the path. Fruition consciousness occurs in two ways. Its initial occurrence, which we have already discussed, takes place in the cognitive series of the path, when it arises in immediate succession to the path consciousness. On that occasion it persists for two or three thought-moments experiencing the bliss of liberation, and then subsides, followed by the life-continuum. But fruition consciousness can occur in another way too. This second mode of occurrence takes the form of a special meditative attainment accessible to the noble persons of the four stages of deliverance. This meditative attainment is called the attainment of fruition (*phalasamāpatti*), and comes in four grades corresponding to the four stages of holiness: the fruition attainment of stream-entry, the fruition attainment of the once-returner, the fruition attainment of the non-returner, and the fruition attainment of arahatship.

Like the fruition consciousness occurring in immediate succession to the path, the attainment of fruition is a supramundane *jhāna* having *nibbāna* for its object. But whereas fruition in the cognitive series of the path lasts only for two or three thought-moments, the fruition attainment entered subsequently by a noble person can last for as long as the meditator determines; it can continue as a series of fruition consciousnesses following one another in uninterrupted succession for hours or even days on end. Thus fruition attainment provides the ariyans with a special resort to which they can turn in order to experience for themselves the bliss of *nibbāna* here and now.

The *Visuddhimagga* discusses fruition attainment under a number of headings. It first defines the attainment of fruition as consisting in the "absorption of the noble fruition in cessation."[1] The *Mahā Ṭīkā* glosses this as meaning that fruition attainment is "the occurrence of the noble fruition-*jhāna* in the mode of absorption with *nibbāna* as its object."[2] (Wr. tr.). Thus this definition discloses two important facts about the attainment of fruition: that it is a *jhāna*, and that this *jhāna* has *nibbāna* as its object. Though fruition consciousness, on occasions of fruition attainment, is not preceded by a

---

1. PP., p. 820. "Yā ariyaphalassa nirodhe appanā." Vism., p. 602.

2. "Ariyassa phalajhānassa nibbāne ārammaṇabhūte appanākārena pavatti." Vism.T. 2:515.

path – each path being unique and unrepeatable – its *jhānic* level always continues to correspond to that of the path from which it originally issued. A yogin who attained a first *jhāna* path will subsequently enter only a first *jhāna* fruition attainment, one who had a second *jhāna* path will always attain a second *jhāna* fruition, etc.[1]

Fruition attainment, the *Visuddhimagga* explains, is beyond the range of worldlings (*puthujjana*), but is available to all noble ones. Each noble person attains that fruition corresponding to his own level of liberation: the stream-enterer attains the fruition of stream-entry, the once-returner the fruition of a once-returner, and so forth. Those who have reached a higher path do not attain a lower fruition while those on a lower level do not attain a higher fruition.[2] The ariyans resort to this attainment for the purpose of experiencing *nibbānic* bliss here and now:

> For just as a king experiences royal bliss and a deity experiences divine bliss, so too the noble ones think 'We shall experience the noble supramundane bliss', and after deciding on the duration, they attain the attainment of fruition whenever they choose.[3]

Fruition attainment comes about by turning the mind away from all objects other than *nibbāna* and focussing it exclusively upon *nibbāna*. To attain fruition the noble disciple should go into solitary retreat, make a prior determination to enter fruition, and then develop insight on formations, going through the series of insights beginning with knowledge of rise and fall. Insight progresses as far as conformity, followed by change-of-lineage knowledge with formations as its object, then "immediately next to it consciousness becomes absorbed in cessation with the attainment of fruition."[4] Since the prior determination was made for fruition, not for a higher path, insight only issues in fruition attainment and not in a higher path. The attainment of the latter requires a separate and different guiding aspiration before developing insight.

Fruition attainment is made to last by a prior volition determining the time of the attainment: for it is by determining it thus 'I shall emerge at such a time' that it lasts until that time comes. Emergence comes when the mind turns away from *nibbāna* and takes as its object some sign of formations. Immediately after fruition attainment is emerged from the mind lapses into the life continuum (*bhavaṅga*). Fruition attainment also occurs momentarily in the process of emerging from the attainment of cessation.[5]

---

1. PP., p. 822. Vism., p. 603.

2. PP., p. 820. Vism., p. 602.

3. PP., p. 821. "Yathā hi rājā rajjasukhaṃ devatā dibbasukhaṃ anubhavanti, evaṃ ariyā, ariyaṃ lokuttarasukhaṃ anubhavissāmā ti addhānaparicchedaṃ katvā icchiticehitakkhaṇe phalasamāpattiṃ samāpajjanti." Vism., p. 602.

4. PP., p. 822. Vism., p. 603. N.B.: Whereas change-of-lineage preceding the path has *nibbāna* for its object, change-of-lineage preceding fruition attainment objectifies formations. The reason is given in the *Visuddimagga Mahā Ṭīkā*: "Why does change-of-lineage not have nibbana as its object here as it does when it precedes the path? Because states belonging to fruition are not associated with an outlet [as in the case of the path]. For this is said 'What states are an outlet? The four unincluded paths'." Vism.T. 2:518.

5. PP., pp. 822-23. Vism., p. 603.

Fruition attainment acquires three names according to the dominant mode of insight in the course of insight-contemplation immediately preceding absorption. If the dominant insight is the contemplation of impermanence, the fruition reached is called the signless liberation (*animittavimokkha*); if the contemplation of suffering dominates fruition is called the desireless liberation (*appaṇihitavimokkha*); and if the contemplation of selflessness dominates fruition is called the void liberation (*suññatavimokkha*). But in a looser sense all three names can be applied to any fruition. For any fruition has as object *nibbāna* – the signless, desireless, and void element; and again any fruition has a nature which is void of lust, hatred, and delusion, lacking the signs of lust, hatred, and delusion, and without desires rooted in lust, hatred, and delusion.[1]

The Attainment of Cessation

A second attainment in the meditative field restricted to yogins of ariyan stature is the attainment of cessation, *nirodhasamāpatti*, also called the cessation of perception and feeling (*sannāvedayitanirodha*).[2] In this attainment it is not perception and feeling alone that cease, but all mental activity in its entirety. Thus the *Visuddhimagga* defines the attainment of cessation as "the non-occurrence of consciousness and its concomitants owing to their progressive cessation."[3]

This attainment has an even more restricted scope than fruition attainment. It can be obtained only by non-returners (*anāgāmis*) and arahats who possess the eight attainments, i.e. the four *jhānas* and the four *āruppas*. Worldlings, stream-enterers, and once-returners – even those possessing the eight attainments – cannot attain it, nor can it be attained by non-returners and arahats who lack mastery over all eight mundane *jhānas*. The reason stream-enterers and once-returners cannot attain it is that they lack the necessary qualifications. To attain cessation requires full possession of the two powers of serenity (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*). Because those below the level of a non-returner have not fully abandoned sensual desire, their power of serenity is not perfected, and without the perfecting of the power of serenity there is no attainment of cessation.[4] Cessation can also only be reached in "five constituent becoming," i.e. in realms where all five aggregates are found. It cannot be reached in the immaterial realms since it must be preceded by the four fine material *jhānas*, which are lacking in those realms.[5]

Non-returners and arahats with the required qualifications attain to cessation because, being wearied by the occurrence and dissolution of formations, they think: "Let us dwell in bliss by being without consciousness here and now and reaching the cessation that is nibbāna."[6] The *Visuddhimagga Mahā Ṭīkā* points out that the phrase "cessation that is

---

1. Nārada, *Manual*., pp. 422-23. MN. 1:298.

2. MN. 1:175, 296, 301-302.

3. PP., p. 824. "Yā anupubbanirodhavasena cittacetasikānaṃ dhammānaṃ appavatti." Vism., p. 604.

4. PP., p. 827. Vism., p. 607.

5. PP., p. 828. Vism., p. 607.

6. PP., p. 828. Vism., p. 607.

nibbāna" means that cessation is similar to the *nibbāna* element without residue (*anupādisesanibbānadhātu*).[1] It should not be taken literally as establishing identity between the two.

To enter cessation the qualified meditator must strive to bring about the cessation of consciousness belonging to the base of neither perception nor non-perception. This demands the balanced coupling of serenity and insight. One who utilizes serenity alone can reach the base of neither perception nor non-perception but cannot reach cessation. One who utilizes insight alone can enter fruition attainment but not cessation. The attainment of cessation requires the alternative application of both serenity and insight.[2]

A meditator wishing to attain cessation enters the first *jhāna*, emerges from it, and contemplates its formations with insight as impermanent, suffering, and selfless. He repeats the same procedure with each meditative attainment up to the base of nothingness, the next to last immaterial *jhāna*. After emerging from the base of nothingness he then must perform four preparatory tasks. First he resolves that any requisites he has with him that belong to others will not be damaged by fire, water, wind, thieves, rats, etc. while he is in cessation. This resolution gives effective protection during the duration of his attainment; his own belongings are protected from damage by the power of the attainment itself. Secondly he resolves that if he is needed by the community of bhikkhus he will emerge from his attainment before a bhikkhu comes to call him. Thirdly he resolves that if the Buddha needs to summon him he should emerge before a bhikkhu is sent to call him. And fourthly he determines that his life span will last at least seven days from the moment he attains cessation.

Having performed these four preparatory tasks, the meditator attains the base of neither perception nor non-perception. Then after one or two turns of consciousness have passed the process of consciousness ceases; he becomes without consciousness, attaining to cessation. The stopping of consciousness takes place automatically, as a result of the meditator's determination to reach cessation. As the nun Dhammadinnā explains:

> Friend Visākha, it does not occur to a monk who is attaining the stopping of perception and feeling: 'I will attain the stopping of perception and feeling,' or 'I am attaining the stopping of perception and feeling,' or 'I have attained the stopping of perception and feeling.' For his mind has been previously so developed in that way that it leads him on to the state of being such.[3]

The meditator will then remain in cessation for as long as he has predetermined. But if he has not done the four preliminary tasks, after reaching the base of neither perception

1. Vism.T. 2:902.

2. PP., p. 828. Vism., p. 607.

3. MLS. 1:364. "Na kho āvuso Visākha saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpajjantassa bhikkhuno evaṃ hoti: ahaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpajjissaṃ ti vā, ahaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpajjāmīti vā, ahaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpanno ti vā, atha khvāssa pubbe va tathā cittaṃ bhāvitaṃ hoti yaṃ taṃ tathattāya upanetīti." MN. 1:302.

nor-non-perception he will return to the base of nothingness without attaining cessation.[1]

Like the attaining of cessation, emergence from cessation comes about automatically, through the exhaustion of the pre-determined time, unless interrupted earlier by the waiting of the bhikkhus, the summons of the Buddha, or the end of the life-span. No verbalization takes place in the course of emergence. As Dhammadinnā says:

> Friend Visākha, it does not occur to a monk who is emerging from the attainment of perception and feeling: 'I will emerge from the attainment of the stopping of perception and feeling,' or 'I am emerging...' or 'I have emerged from the attainment of the stopping of perception and feeling.' For his mind has been previously so developed in that way that it leads him on to the state of being such.[2]

Emergence from the attainment of cessation comes about by means of the fruition of non-returning in the case of a non-returner and the fruition of arahatship in the case of an arahat. As soon as the yogin emerges from cessation, there takes place a series of fruition consciousnesses appropriate to his spiritual level. But for all yogins who emerge from cessation the mind inclines to *nibbāna*: "When a bhikkhu has emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling, friend Visākha, his consciousness inclines to seclusion, leans to seclusion, tends to seclusion."[3] Since the mind of one emerging from cessation tends to *nibbāna*, a non-returner who has come out from cessation can use his attainment as a basis for achieving arahatship. As the Buddha says: "A bhikkhu, completely passing beyond the base of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling. Having seen with wisdom his cankers are destroyed." [4] (Wr. tr.).

The attainment of cessation represents the acme of a graduated process of bringing to a stop the formations of body and mind. The bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā explains that there are three types of formations – the bodily formation (*kāyasaṅkhāra*), the verbal formation (*vacīsaṅkhāra*), and the mental formation (*cittasaṅkhāra*). The bodily formation is in-and-out breathing, which is a bodily process connected with the body; the verbal formation is applied and sustained thought (*vitakkavicāra*), the mental factors directing verbalization; the mental formation is perception and feeling (*saññā ca vedanā ca*), which are mental processes connected with the mind. For one who is entering the attainment of cessation, Dhammadinnā states, the verbal formation ceases first [in the

---

1. PP., pp. 831-32. Vism., p. 610.

2. MLS. 1:364. "Na kho, āvuso Visākha, saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhahantassa bhikkhuno evaṃ hoti: ahaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhahissanti vā, ahaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhahāmīti vā, ahaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhito ti vā, atha khvāssapubbe va tathā cittaṃ bhāvitaṃ hoti yaṃ taṃ tathattāya upanetīti." MN. 1:302.

3. PP., p. 832. "Saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhitassa kho āvuso Visākha bhikkhuno vivekaninnaṃ cittaṃ hoti vivekapoṇaṃ vivekapabbhāranti." MN. 1:302.

4. "Sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti." MN. 1:175.

second *jhāna*], the bodily formation ceases next [in the fourth *jhāna*], and the mental formation ceases last [with the entrance into cessation].[1] The Buddha confirms this in a discourse explaining "the gradual cessation of formations" (*anupubbasaṅkhāra-nirodha*).[2]

The question might arise as to the difference between a corpse and a meditator in the attainment of cessation. The Venerable Sāriputta explains:

> When a bhikkhu is dead, friend, has completed his term, his bodily formations have ceased and are quite still, his verbal formations have ceased and are quite still, his mental formations have ceased and are quite still, his life is exhausted, his heat has subsided, and his faculties are broken up. When a bhikkhu has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling, his bodily formations have ceased and are quite still, his verbal formations have ceased and are quite still, his mental formations have ceased and are quite still, his life is unexhausted, his heat has not subsided, his faculties are quite whole.[3]

Another question which might arise concerns the differences between the base of neither perception nor non-perception, the attainment of fruition, and the attainment of cessation. The attainment of cessation differs from the first two in that these two are states of consciousness made up of mind and mental factors (*citta-cetasika*) while cessation is not a state of consciousness but the stopping of the mental continuum together with its factors. The fourth *aruppa* is a purely mundane attainment in the sphere of serenity (*samatha*) accessible to all meditators with the necessary strength of concentration. Its object is purely mundane – the four aggregates of the third *aruppa*. It does not presuppose any achievements in insight or any attainment of ariyan stature; it is thus held in common by both Buddhist and non-Buddhist meditators. The attainment of fruition, in contrast, is a supramundane state bringing into balance both serenity and insight. Its object is supramundane, *nibbāna*. Each fruition is open only to those ariyans who have reached the corresponding level of deliverance and it is entered by a preliminary course of practice in insight contemplation on the three characteristics. The attainment of cessation, as distinct from both, is neither mundane nor supramundane, neither conditioned nor unconditioned. As the cessation of consciousness it takes no object. It is open solely to non-returners and arahats having the eight attainments and is reached through an alternating course of serenity and insight. Moreover, to enter the attainment of cessation requires the fulfilment of the four preliminary tasks, while such preparations are not needed for the base of neither perception nor non-perception or for the attainment of fruition.

---

1. MN. 1:302.

2. SN. 4:217.

3. PP., pp. 832-33. "Yvāyaṃ, āvuso, mato, kālakato, tassa kāyasaṇkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacī saṅkhārā… cittasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu parikkhiṇo, usmā vūpasantā, indriyāni paribhinnāni. Yvāyaṃ bhikkhu saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpanno, tassapi kāyasaṅkhārā niruddhā, paṭippassaddhā, vacīsaṅkhārā… citta saṅkhārā niruddhā, paṭippassaddhā, āyu aparikkhīṇo, usmā avupasantā, indriyāni aparibhinnāni ti." MN. 1:296.

The Seven Types of Noble Persons

All noble persons, as we saw, acquire supramundane *jhāna* along with their attainment of the noble paths and fruits. The noble disciples at each of the four stages of deliverance, moreover, have access to the supramundane *jhāna* of their respective fruition attainments to which they can resort to experience the peace of *nibbāna*. However, it remains problematic to what extent they share in the possession of mundane *jhāna*. To determine an answer to this question it is helpful to consult an early typology of noble disciples described most fully in the Kīṭāgiri Sutta (MN. No. 70), reformulated in the Puggalapaññatti of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, and clarified further in the commentaries. This typology classifies the eight noble persons of the four paths and fruits into seven types: [1] the faith-devotee, [2] the one liberated by faith, [3] the body-witness, [4] the one liberated in both ways, [5] the truth-devotee, [6] the one attained to understanding, and [7] the one liberated by wisdom.[1] A look at the explanation of these seven types will enable us to see the range of *jhānic* attainment reached by the noble disciples, and from there to assess the place of mundane *jhāna* in the early Buddhist picture of the perfected individual.

The seven types divide into three general classes, each class being defined by the predominance of a particular spiritual faculty. The first two types are governed roughly by predominance of faith, the middle two by predominance of concentration, and the last three by predominance of wisdom. To this division, however, certain qualifications will have to be made as we go along.

[l] The faith devotee (*saddhānusāri*) is explained in the suttas thus:

> Here someone has not yet, in his own person, reached those peaceful uncorporeal deliverances transcending all corporeality; nor have, after wisely understanding all things, the biases [*āsava*] reached extinction. But he has a certain degree of faith in the Perfect One, a certain degree of devotion to him, and he possesses such faculties as faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. Such a one, O monks, is called a Faith-Devotee.[2]

The Puggalapaññatti definition reads:

> What person is a faith-devotee? In a person practising for the realization of the fruit of stream-entry the faculty of faith is predominant; he develops the noble path led by faith, with faith as the forerunner. This person is called a faith-devotee. A person practising for the realization of the fruit of stream-entry is a

---

1. In Pāli: [1] *saddhānusāri*, [2] *saddhāvimutta*, [3] *kāyasakkhi*, [4] *ubhatobhāgavimutta*, [5] *dhammānusāri*, [6] *diṭṭhippatta*, and [7] *paññāvimutta*.

2. *Path to Deliverance*, pp. 183-84. "Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā aparikkhīṇā honti, Tathāgate c'assa saddhāmattaṃ hoti pemamattaṃ, api c'assa ime dhammā honti seyyathīdaṃ saddhindriyaṃ viriyindriyaṃ satindriyaṃ samādhindriyaṃ paññindriyaṃ. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo saddhānusāri." MN. 1:479.

> faith-devotee. When established in the fruit he is one liberated by faith.[1] (Wr. tr.).

Whereas the sutta explanation explicitly mentions the lack of the "incorporeal deliverances" (*āruppā vimokkhā*), i.e. the four immaterial *jhānas*, the Puggalapaññatti omits this, but states more openly his status as a person on the path of stream-entry. Both concur in recognizing the faith-devotee as a disciple with predominance of faith. When the immaterial *jhānas* are excluded from the faith devotee's spiritual equipment, this implies nothing with regard to his achievement of the four lower mundane *jhānas*. It would seem that the faith-devotee can have previously attained any of the four fine material *jhānas* before reaching the path, and can also be a dry-insight worker bereft of mundane *jhāna*. The commentaries add a new element – a connection between the disciple's subject of insight contemplation and his dominant faculty. Thus for the faith-devotee the subject of insight is impermanence. The *Visuddhimagga* says:

> When a man brings [formations] to mind as impermanent and, having great resolution, acquires the faith faculty, he becomes a faith devotee at the moment of the stream-entry path.[2]

[2] The one liberated by faith (*saddhāvimutta*) is strictly and literally defined as a noble disciple at the six intermediate levels, from the fruit of stream-entry through to the path of arahatship, who lacks the immaterial *jhānas* and has a predominance of the faith faculty. The Buddha explains the one liberated by faith as follows:

> But who, O monks, is the one 'Liberated by Faith'? Here someone has not yet, in his own person, reached those peaceful uncorporeal deliverances transcending all corporeality; and, after wisely understanding all things, have only some biases reached extinction; but his faith in the Perfect One is firmly established, deeply rooted and steadfast. Such a one, O monks, is called Liberated by Faith.[3]

As in the case of the faith-devotee, the one liberated by faith, while lacking the immaterial *jhānas*, may still be an obtainer of the four mundane *jhānas* as well as a dry insight worker.

The Puggalapaññatti states that the person liberated by faith is one who understands the Four Noble Truths, has seen and verified by means of wisdom the dhammas proclaimed by the Tathāgata, and having seen with wisdom has eliminated some of his cankers.

---

1. "Katamo ca puggalo saddhānusāri? Yassa puggalassa sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipannassa saddhindriyaṃ adhimattaṃ hoti. Saddhāvāhi saddhāpubbaṅgamaṃ ariyamaggaṃ bhāveti. Ayaṃ vuccati puggalo saddhānusāri. Sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno puggalo saddhānusāri. Phale ṭhito saddhāvimuttoti." *Dhātukathā Puggalapaññattipāḷi*, [Pāli Text in Burmese script]. (Rangoon. Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961), p. 182 (hereafter cited as Pug.P.).

2. PP., p. 770. Vism., p. 566.

3. *Path to Deliverance*, p. 183. "Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo saddhāvimutto? Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti, Tathāgate c'assa saddhā niviṭṭhā hoti mūlajātā patiṭṭhitā. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo saddhāvimutto." MT. 1:478.

However, he has not done so as easily as the *diṭṭhipatta*, the person attained to understanding, whose progress is easier due to his superior wisdom.[1] The fact that the one liberated by faith has destroyed only some of his cankers implies that he has advanced beyond the first path but not yet reached the final fruit, the fruition of arahatship.[2]

[3] The "body witness" (*kāyasakkhi*) is a noble disciple at the six intermediate levels, from the fruit of stream-entry to the path of arahatship, who has a predominance of the faculty of concentration and can obtain the immaterial *jhānas*. The sutta explanation reads:

> But who, O monks, is a 'Body-Witness'? Here someone has, in his own person, reached those peaceful Uncorporeal Deliverances transcending all corporeality. But, after wisely understanding all things, only some biases have reached extinction. Such a one, O monks, is called a Body-Witness.[3]

The Puggalapaññatti offers a slight variation on this phrasing: "What person is a body-witness? Here some person has, in his own person, reached the eight deliverances, and having seen with wisdom, some of his cankers are destroyed."[4] (Wr. tr.). For the sutta's "immaterial deliverances" (*āruppā vimokkhā*) the Puggalapaññatti substitutes "the eight deliverances" (*aṭṭhavimokkhā*). These eight deliverances consist of three meditative attainments pertaining to the fine material sphere (inclusive of all four lower *jhānas*), the four immaterial *jhānas*, and the attainment of cessation.[5] But though the Puggalapaññatti makes this reformulation, it should not be thought either that the achievement of all eight deliverances is necessary to become classified as a body-witness or that the achievement of the three lower deliverances is sufficient. What is both requisite and sufficient to receive the designation "body-witness" is the partial destruction of defilements coupled with the attainment of at least the lowest immaterial *jhāna*. The *Visuddhimagga Ṭīkā* states that the body-witness need only obtain one of the immaterial *jhānas*, and holds that this type becomes fivefold by way of those who obtain any of the four immaterial *jhānas* and the one who also obtains the attainment of cessation.[6]

The *Visuddhimagga* connects the body-witness with suffering as a subject of insight and concentration as a predominant faculty: "When a man brings (formations) to mind as painful and, having great tranquility, acquires the faculty of concentration, he is called a

1. Pug.P., pp. 184-85.

2. The *Visuddhimagga*, however, says that arahats in whom faith is predominant can also be called "liberated by faith." (PP., p. 770. Vism. p. 566). Its *Ṭīkā* points out that this remark is only intended figuratively, not literally, in the sense that for those arahats arahatship results from being *saddhāvimutta* at the moment of the fourth path. Literally such arahats would be *paññāvimutta*. Vism.T. 2:468.

3. *Path to Deliverance*, p. 182. "Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo kāyasakkhi: Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo kāyasakkhi." MN. 1:478.

4. Pug.P., p. 184.

5. DN. 3:159. MN. 2:12. Also see BMTP., pp. 484-86.

6. Vism.T. 2:466.

body-witness in all eight instances,"[1] i.e. from the path of stream-entry through arahatship. Its *Ṭīkā* explains that this extension of the scope of body-witness to persons on the first path and to arahats is figurative in intention and should not be taken as literal. Literally, a body-witness is found only in the intermediate six stages.

> One with the eight attainments on the first path would have to be either a faith-devotee or a truth-devotee; the same person at the final fruition would be one liberated in both ways.[2] (Wr. tr.).

[4] One who is liberated in both ways (*ubhatobhāgavimutta*) is an arahat who has completely destroyed the defilements and possesses the imaterial attainments. The commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya explains the name "liberated in both ways" as meaning "through the immaterial attainment he is liberated from the material body and through the path [of arahatship] he is liberated from the mental body."[3] (Wr. tr.). The sutta defines this type of disciple thus:

> Now, who, O monks, is the one Liberated in Both Ways? Here someone has in his own person reached those peaceful Uncorporeal Deliverances transcending all corporeality. And, after wisely understanding all things, the biases have reached extinction. Such a one, O monks, is called 'Liberated in Both Ways.'[4]

The Puggalapaññatti gives basically the same formula, but replaces "immaterial deliverances" with "the eight deliverances."[5] (Wr. tr.). The same principle of interpretation that applied to the body-witness applies here: the attainment of any immaterial *jhāna*, even the lowest, is sufficient to qualify a person as both-ways liberated. The *Visuddhimagga Ṭīkā* says: "One who has attained arahatship after gaining even one [immaterial *jhāna*] is liberated in both ways."[6] (Wr. tr.).

And the Majjhima Nikāya commentary states:

> The one liberated in both ways is fivefold by way of those four who attain arahatship by comprehending formations after emerging from one or another

---

1. PP., p. 770. "Yo pana [sankhāre] dukkhato manasikaronto passaddhibahulo samādhindriyaṃ paṭilabhati, so sabbattha kāyasakkhi nāma hoti." Vism., p. 566.

2. "Aṭṭhavimokkhalābhī pana paṭhamamaggakkhaṇe saddhānusāri vā dhammānusāri vā siyā, majjhe chasu ṭhānesu kāyasakkhi, pariyosāne ubhatobhāgavimutto." Vism.T. 2:466. The position that one with the eight attainments on the first path can be a faith-devotee or a truth-devotee conflicts with the explanation of these types in the Kīṭāgiri Sutta. However the sevenfold typology of this sutta makes no provision for a disciple of the first path who gains the immaterial *jhānas*.

3. "Arūpasamāpattiyā rūpakāyato vimutto. Maggena nāmakāyato." MN. 2:131.

4. *Path to Deliverance*, p. 182. "Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo ubhatobhāgavimutto? Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo ubhatobhāgavimutto." MN. 1:477.

5. Pug.P., p. 184.

6. "Tattha pana ekampi [arūpajjhānaṃ] laddhā arahattaṃ patto ubhatobhāgavimutto eva hoti." Vism.T. 2:466.

of the four immaterial attainments, and non-returners who attain arahatship after emerging from [the attainment of] cessation.[1] (Wr. tr.).

[5] The "truth-devotee" (*dhammānusāri*) is a disciple on the first path in whom the faculty of wisdom is predominant. Here "dhamma" has the meaning of wisdom (*paññā*).[2] The Buddha explains the truth-devotee as follows:

> But who, O monks, is a 'Truth Devotee'? Here someone has not yet, in his person, reached those peaceful uncorporeal deliverances transcending all corporeality; but, after wisely understanding all things, have the biases reached extinction. But the teachings made known by the Perfect One, find a certain understanding in him, and he is endowed with such faculties as faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. Such a one, O monks, is called a Truth-Devotee.[3]

The Puggalapaññatti defines the truth-devotee in the same way as the faith devotee, except that it substitutes wisdom for faith as the predominant faculty and as the leader and forerunner in the development of the path. It adds that when a truth devotee is established in the fruit of stream entry he becomes one attained to understanding (*diṭṭhippatta*).[4] The sutta and Abhidhamma works again differ as to emphasis, the one stressing lack of the immaterial *jhānas*, the other the ariyan stature. The *Visuddhimagga* connects the truth-devotee with the contemplation of selflessness: "When a man brings [formations] to mind as not self and having great wisdom, acquires the faculty of understanding, he becomes a Dhamma-devotee at the moment of the stream entry path.[5] Presumably, though the four immaterial *jhānas* are denied for the truth-devotee, he may have any of the four fine material *jhānas* or be a bare insight practitioner without any mundane *jhāna*.

[6] The one attained to understanding (*diṭṭhippatta*) is a noble disciple at the six intermediate levels who lacks the immaterial *jhānas* and has a predominance of the wisdom faculty. The Buddha explains:

> But who, O monks, is he who has 'Attained to Understanding'? Here someone has not yet, in his own person, reached those peaceful uncorporeal deliverances transcending all corporeality; and, after wisely understanding all things, only some biases have reached extinction; but the teaching made known by the

---

1. "So catunnaṃ arūpasamāpattīnaṃ ekekato vuṭṭhāya saṃkhāre sammasitvā arahattaṃ pattānaṃ catunnaṃ, nirodhā vuṭṭhāya arahattaṃ pattā anāgāmino ca vasena pañcavidhā honti." MN.A. 3:131.

2. PP., pp. 771. Vism., p. 566.

3. *Path to Deliverance*, p. 183. "Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo dhammānusāri? Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā aparikkhīṇā honti, Tathāgatappaveditā c'assa dhammā paññāya mattaso nijjhānaṃ khamanti, api c'assa ime dhammā honti seyyathīdaṃ saddhindriyaṃ viriyindriyaṃ satindriyaṃ samādhindriyaṃ paññindriyaṃ. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo dhammānusārī." MN. 1:479.

4. Pug.P., p. 185.

5. PP., p. 770. "Yo pana anattato manasikaronto vedabahulo paññindriyaṃ paṭilabhati, so sotāpatti-maggakkaṇe dhammānusāri hoti." Vism., p. 566.

Perfect One, he has fully comprehended and penetrated. Such a one, O monks, is called one who has 'Attained to Understanding'.[1]

The Puggalapaññatti defines the one attained to understanding as a person who understands the Four Noble Truths, has seen and verified by means of wisdom the *dhammas* proclaimed by the Tathāgata, and having seen with wisdom has eliminated some of his cankers.[2] He is thus the "wisdom counterpart" of the one liberated by faith, but progresses more easily than the latter by virtue of his sharper wisdom.

[7] The one liberated by wisdom (*paññāvimutta*) is an arahat who does not obtain the immaterial attainments. In the words of the sutta:

> But who, O monks, is the one Liberated by Wisdom? Here someone has not yet, in his own person, reached those peaceful Uncorporeal Deliverance transcending all corporeality. But after wisely understanding all things, have the biases reached extinction. Such a one, O monks, is called 'Liberated by Wisdom.'[3]

The Puggalapaññatti's definition merely replaces "immaterial deliverances" with "the eight deliverances."[4] Though such arahats do not reach the immaterial *jhānas* nothing is said to exclude their attainment of the lower *jhānas*. The commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya states: "The one liberated by wisdom is fivefold by way of the dry insight-worker and those four who attain arahatship after emerging from the four *jhānas*."[5] (Wr. tr.).

It should be noted that the one liberated by wisdom is contrasted not with the one liberated by faith, but with the one liberated in both ways. The issue that divides the two types of arahat is the lack or possession of the four immaterial *jhānas* and the attainment of cessation. The person liberated by faith is found at the six intermediate levels of sanctity, not at the level of arahatship. When he obtains arahatship, lacking the immaterial *jhānas*, he becomes one liberated by wisdom even though faith rather than wisdom is his predominant faculty. Similarly a meditator with predominance of concentration but lacking the immaterial attainments also becomes one liberated by wisdom when he attains arahatship. But a yogin who reaches arahatship while possessing the immaterial attainments will still be one "liberated in both ways" even if

1. *Path to Deliverance*, p. 183. "Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo diṭṭhippatto? Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti, Tathāgatappaveditā c'assa dhammā paññāya vodiṭṭhā honti vocaritā. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo diṭṭhippatto." MN. 1:478.

2. Pug.P., p. 185.

3. *Path to Deliverance*, p. 182. "Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo paññāvimutto? Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkīṇā honti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo paññāvimutto." MN. 1:477-78.

4. Pug.P., p. 185.

5. "So sukkhavipassako, catūhi jhānehi vuṭṭhāya arahattaṃ pattā cattāro cāti imesaṃ vasena pañcavidhova hoti." MN.A. 3:131.

wisdom rather than concentration claims first place among his spiritual endowments. as was the case with the Venerable Sāriputta.

Jhāna and the Arahat

From the standpoint of their spiritual stature the seven types of noble persons can be divided into three categories. The first, which includes the faith-devotee (*saddhānusāri*) and the truth-devotee (*dhammānusāri*), consists of those on the path of stream-entry, the first of the eight ariyan persons. The second category, comprising the one liberated by faith (*saddhāvimutta*), the body-witness (*kāyasakkhi*), and the one attained to understanding (*diṭṭhippatta*), consists of those on the six intermediate levels, from the stream-enterer to one on the path of arahatship. The third category, comprising the one liberated in both ways (*ubhatobhāgavimutta*) and the one liberated by wisdom (*paññāvimutta*), consists only of arahats.

The *ubhatobhāgavimutta*, "one liberated in both ways," and the *paññāvimutta*, "one liberated by wisdom," thus represent the terms of a twofold typology of arahats into which every arahat can be fitted. The basis for distinguishing the two is the degree of their accomplishment in *jhāna*. The *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahat experiences in his own person the "peaceful deliverances" of the immaterial sphere, the *paññāvimutta* arahat lacks this full experience of the immaterial *jhānas*. Each of these two types, according to the commentaries, again becomes fivefold. The *ubhatobhāgavimutta* is fivefold by way of those who possess the ascending four immaterial *jhānas* and the attainment of cessation, the *paññāvimutta* by way of those who reach arahatship after emerging from the four fine material *jhānas* and the dry insight meditator whose insight lacks the support of *jhāna*.

The possibility of arahatship without possession of a mundane *jhāna* has sometimes been questioned by Theravāda Buddhist scholars, but the weight of the Theravāda tradition appears to lean towards the recognition of such a possibility. We have already mentioned the *suddhavipassanāyānika*, the yogin with bare insight as his vehicle, also called the *sukkhavipassaka*, the dry insight meditator. That this kind of meditator does not already possess a *jhāna* attainment which he just neglects to use as a basis for insight seems implicit from the distinction the *Visuddhimagga* makes in its discussion of the *jhānic* level of the path:

> ... the path arisen in a bare-insight [dry insight] worker, and the path arisen in one who possesses a jhāna attainment but who has not made the jhāna the basis for insight,... are paths of the first jhāna only.[1]

Here, when the dry-insight worker is distinguished from the *jhāna*-attainer who does not use his *jhāna* to develop insight, the clear implication is that the former does not have a basic *jhāna*. If he did there would be no reason to speak of the two as separate cases.

1. PP., p. 779. "…sukkhavipassakassa uppannamaggo pi samāpattilābhino jhānaṃ pādakaṃ akatvā uppannamaggo pi… paṭhamajjhānikā va honti." Vism., p. 573.

Further evidence for the existence of arahats lacking mundane *jhāna* is provided by the Susīma Sutta together with its commentaries.[1] In this sutta the monk Susīma is perplexed about a group of monks who claim to have reached *aññā*, the final knowledge of arahatship, yet deny possessing supernormal powers or the peaceful deliverances of the immaterial sphere. To the question how they can be arahats without these attainments they reply: "We are liberated by wisdom" (*paññāvimuttā kho mayaṃ*). Confused by this answer, Susīma goes to the Buddha for clarification. The Buddha declares: "Susīma, first the knowledge of the structure of phenomena arises, afterwards the knowledge of *nibbāna*."[2] (Wr. tr.). Then he explains the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of the five aggregates. He shows how contemplation of the three characteristics leads to dispassion, detachment and emancipation, elucidates the law of dependent arising, and convinces Susīma that knowledge of the causal law can issue in liberation without requiring any possession of supernormal powers or the immaterial attainments.[3]

It is true that in the sutta itself a lack of *jhāna* is not ascribed to the group of *paññāvimutta* arahats. The text only mentions the absence of the five *abhiññās* and the *āruppas*. But the exegetical sources on the sutta fill in the gap, showing that these arahats reached their goal without mundane *jhāna* of absorption level. The commentary rephrases the monks' reply "We are liberated by wisdom" to make explicit the fact that they are dry insight meditators: "'We are liberated by wisdom, friend': we are contemplatives, dry insight workers, liberated by wisdom alone."[4] (Wr. tr.). The commentary explains the knowledge of the structure of phenomena (*dhammaṭṭhitiñāṇa*) as insight knowledge and the knowledge of *nibbāna* (*nibbāne ñāṇa*) as path knowledge. It states that the Buddha gave the long disquisition on insight "for the purpose of showing the arising of knowledge even without concentration."[5] (Wr. tr.). The subcommentary makes the sutta's purport still clearer by explaining the commentary's phrase "even without concentration" as meaning even without concentration previously accomplished, reaching the characteristic of "serenity" (Wr. tr.), adding that "this is said in reference to the *vipassanāyānika*."[6] From all this it follows that these arahats, attaining emancipation by wisdom without prior concentration of the serenity level, lacked mundane *jhāna*. As arahats, however, they would necessarily have reached the supramundane *jhāna* of the paths and fruits, with constant access to the *jhāna* of the attainment of fruition.

---

1. SN. 2:119-23.

2. "Pubbe kho Susīma dhammaṭṭhitiñāṇaṃ pacchā nibbāne ñāṇaṃ." SN. 2:124.

3. *Ibid*. 2:124-27.

4. "Avuso mayaṃ nijjhānakā sukkhavipassaka paññāmatten'eva vimuttā ti dasseti." SN.A. 2:117. N.B. The word *nijjhānaka* is ambiguous: the word *nijjhāna* is used in the suttas to mean reflection or contemplation and we here follow that usage by rendering its derivative as "contemplative"; but the purport might also be "lacking *jhāna*," as the prefix *nir* sometimes has a privative as well as augmentative meaning.

5. "Vinā pi samādhiṃ evaṃ ñāṇuppattidassanatthaṃ." *Ibid*.

6. "Samatha lakkhaṇappattaṃ purimasiddhaṃ vinā pi samādhinti vipassanā yānikaṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ." SN.T. 2:125.

In contrast to the *paññāvimutta* arahats, those arahats who are *ubhatobhāgavimutta* enjoy a twofold liberation. Through their mastery over the formless attainments they are liberated from the material body (*rūpakāya*), capable of dwelling in this very life in the meditations corresponding to the immaterial planes of existence; through their attainment of arahatship they are liberated from the mental body (*nāmakāya*), presently free from all defilements and sure of final emancipation from future becoming.[1] *Paññāvimutta* arahats only possess the second of these two liberations.

The double liberation of the *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahat should not be confused with another double liberation frequently mentioned in the suttas in connection with arahatship. This second pair of liberations, called *cetovimutti paññāvimutti*, "liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom," is shared in common by all arahats. It appears in the stock passage descriptive of arahatship: "With the destruction of the cankers he here and now enters and dwells in the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, realizing it for himself with direct knowledge."[2] That this twofold liberation belongs to *paññāvimutta* arahats as well as to those who are *ubhatobhāgavimutta* is made clear by the Putta Sutta, where the stock passage is used for two types of arahats called the "white lotus recluse" and the "red lotus recluse":

> How, monks, is a person a white lotus recluse? Here, monks, with the destruction of the cankers a monk here and now enters and dwells in the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, having realized it for himself with direct knowledge. Yet he does not dwell experiencing the eight deliverances with his body. Thus, monks, a person is a white lotus recluse.
>
> And how, monks, is a person a red lotus recluse? Here, monks, with the destruction of the cankers a monk here and now enters and dwells in the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, having realized it for himself with direct knowledge. And he dwells experiencing the eight deliverances with his body. Thus, monks, a person is a red lotus recluse.[3] (Wr. tr.).

Since the description of these two types coincides with that of *paññāvimutta* and *ubhatobhāgavimutta* the two pairs may be identified, the white lotus recluse with the *paññāvimutta*, the red lotus recluse with the *ubhatobhāgavimutta*. Yet the *paññāvimutta* arahat, while lacking the experience of the eight deliverances, still has both *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*.

---

1. Vism.T. 2:468.

2. See Chapter VII, p. 335.

3. "Kathañca bhikkhave puggalo samaṇapuṇḍarīko hoti? Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭh'eva dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati, no ca kho aṭṭhavimokhe kāyena phassitvā viharati. Evaṃ kho bhikkhave puggalo samaṇapuṇḍarīko hoti.

Kathañca bhikkhave puggalo samaṇapadumo hoti? Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭh'eva dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati, aṭṭha ca vimokhe kāyena phassitvā viharati. Evaṃ kho bhikkhave puggalo samaṇapadumo hoti." AN. 2:87.

Other suttas help fill in the meaning of *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*. The latter term is almost invariably used in reference to arahatship, signifying the arahat's permanent deliverance from ignorance through his full penetration of the Four Noble Truths. The term *cetovimutti* has a more varied application. In some places it signifies the temporary release of the mind from defilements given by attainments in serenity meditation, as when the Mahāvedalla Sutta speaks of the fourth *jhāna*, the four *Brahmavihāras*, and the base of nothingness as forms of *cetovimutti*.[1] But elsewhere *cetovimutti* is held up as the final goal of the Buddhist meditative discipline. In this context it is usually qualified by the adjective "unshakeable" (*akuppā*). Thus the Mahāvedalla Sutta calls "unshakeable liberation of mind" the chief of all liberations of mind.[2] After attaining enlightenment the Buddha declares: "Unshakeable is the liberation of my mind."[3] And elsewhere he says: "This is the goal of the holy life, monks, this is its essence, this is its consummation – the unshakeable liberation of the mind."[4] (Wr. tr.).

When *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* are joined together and described as "cankerless" (*anāsava*), they can be taken to indicate two aspects of the arahat's deliverance. *Cetovimutti* signifies the release of his mind from craving and its associated defilements, *paññāvimutti* the release from ignorance: "With the fading away of lust there is liberation of mind, with the fading away of ignorance there is liberation by wisdom."[5] (Wr. tr.). "As he sees and understands thus his mind is liberated from the canker of sensual desire, from the canker of existence, from the canker of ignorance"[6] (Wr. tr.) – here release from the first two cankers can be understood as *cetovimutti*, release from the canker of ignorance as *paññāvimutti*. In the commentaries *cetovimutti* is identified with the concentration factor in the fruit of arahatship, *paññāvimutti* with the wisdom factor:

> By the word 'mind' the concentration concomitant with the fruit of arahatship is meant, by the word 'wisdom' the concomitant wisdom is meant. The concentration there is called 'liberation of mind' because it has liberated the mind from lust, the wisdom is called 'liberation by wisdom' because it has liberated the mind from ignorance.[7] (Wr. tr.).

Since every arahat reaches arahatship through the Noble Eightfold Path, he must have attained supramundane *jhāna* in the form of right concentration, the eighth factor of the path, defined as the four *jhānas*. This *jhāna* remains with him as the concentration of the fruition attainment of arahatship, which occurs at the level of supramundane *jhāna*

1. MN. l:296-98.

2. *Ibid*. 1:298.

3. "Akuppā me cetovimutti." SN. 5:423.

4. "Yā ca kho ayaṃ bhikkhave akuppā cetovimutti etad atthaṃ idaṃ bhikkhave brahmacariyaṃ etad sāraṃ etaṃ pariyosānaṃ." MN. 1:l97.

5. "… Rāgavirāgā cetovimutti avijjāvirāgā paññāvimutti." AN. l:61.

6. MN. 1:183-84.

7. "Ettha cetovacanena arahattaphala sampayutto va samādhi, paññāvacanena taṃsampayuttā paññā vuttā. Tattha ca samādhi rāgato vimuttattā cetovimutti, paññā avijjāya vimuttattā paññā vimuttīti veditabbo." MN.A. l:169.

corresponding to that of his path. Thus he always stands in possession of at least the supramundane *jhāna* of fruition, called the *anāsavaṃ cetovimutti*, "cankerless liberation of mind." However this consideration does not reflect back on his mundane attainments, requiring that every arahat possesses mundane *jhāna*.

Nevertheless, though early Buddhism tends to acknowledge the possibility of a dry-visioned arahatship, the attitude prevails that *jhānas* are still desirable attributes in an arahat. They are of value not only prior to final attainment, as a foundation for insight, but retain their value even afterwards as well. The value of *jhāna* in the stage of arahatship, when all spiritual training has been completed, is twofold. One concerns the arahat's inner experience, the other his outer significance as a representative of the Buddha's dispensation.

On the side of inner experience the *jhānas* are valued as providing the arahat with a "blissful dwelling here and now" (*diṭṭhadhammasukhavihāra*).[1] The suttas often show arahats attaining to *jhāna* and the Buddha himself declares the four *jhānas* to be figuratively a kind of *nibbāna* in this present life.[2] With respect to levels and factors there is no difference between the mundane *jhānas* of an arahat and those of a non-arahat. The difference concerns their function. For non-arahats the mundane *jhānas* constitute wholesome *kamma*; they are deeds with a potential to produce results, to precipitate rebirth in a corresponding realm of existence. But in the case of an arahat mundane *jhāna* is no more *kamma*. Since he has eradicated ignorance and craving, the roots of *kamma*, his actions leave no residue; they have no capacity to generate results. For him the *jhānic* consciousness is, in Abhidhamma terms, a *kiriya* consciousness, a mere functional occurrence which comes and goes and once gone disappears without a trace.[3]

The value of the *jhānas* extends beyond the confines of the arahat's personal experience and testifies to the spiritual efficacy of the Buddha's dispensation itself. From the evidence of the texts the early Buddhists regarded the *jhānas* as ornamentations of the yogin, testimonies to the accomplishment of the spiritually perfect man and the effectiveness of the teaching he follows. A stock passage used to commend a worthy monk reads: "He gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four *jhānas* pertaining to the higher consciousness, blissful dwellings here and now."[4] (Wr. tr.). The Buddha calls this ability to gain the *jhānas* at will a quality that makes a monk an elder. When accompanied by several other spiritual accomplishments the same ability is said to be an essential quality of "a recluse who graces recluses" (*samaṇesu samaṇasukhumālo*) and of a monk who can move unobstructed in the four directions.[5] Having ready access to the four *jhānas* makes an elder dear and agreeable, respected and esteemed by his fellow

1. See MN. 1:33.

2. See AN. 4:453-54.

3. Nārada, *Manual.*, pp. 43-45.

4. "Catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ abhicetasikānaṃ diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārānaṃ nikāmalābhī hoti akicchalābhī akasiralābhī…" AN. 2:23.

5. AN. 3:131, 135.

monks.[1] Facility in gaining the *jhānas* is one of the eight qualities of a completely inspiring monk (*samantapāsādika bhikkhu*) perfect in all respects; it is also one of the eleven foundations of faith (*saddhāpadānāni*).[2] It is significant that in all these lists of qualities the last item is always the attainment of arahatship, "the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom," showing that all desirable qualities in a bhikkhu culminate in arahatship.

On one occasion, when a number of chief disciples met together in a lovely Salwood at Gosinga on a beautiful moonlit night, the discussion arose among them as to what type of monk could illumine that Salwood. The Venerable Revata answered that it would be a monk who delights in solitary meditation, who is delighted by solitary meditation, who is intent on mental tranquility. The Venerable Sāriputta replied that it would be a monk who could abide in whatever meditative attainment he wanted in the morning, midday, and evening.[3] Sāriputta himself is extolled for his ability to enter the four *jhānas*, the four *āruppas*, and the attainment of cessation without giving rise to the thoughts "I am attaining," "I have attained" or "I have emerged." The reason he can avoid such thoughts is that, as an arahat, he has uprooted all "I"-making, "mine"-making, and tendencies to conceit.[4] Elsewhere the Buddha praises Sāriputta for his skill in entering each of the nine attainments, analyzing them into their constituent formations, and contemplating them with a mind unconfined by attraction or repulsion.[5]

The higher the degree of his mastery over the meditative attainments, the higher the esteem in which an arahat monk is held and the more praiseworthy his accomplishment is considered to be. On one occasion the Buddha met with three arahat bhikkhus – the Venerable Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila – and elicited from them the admission that they were all capable of attaining the four *jhānas*, the four *āruppas*, cessation, and the fruit of arahatship. After this discussion the Buddha declared that if all the people in the world were to recollect these three young men with a mind of confidence, it would lead to their welfare and happiness for a long time to come. He concludes with the words: "See how these three young men are faring for the welfare of the many folk, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and men."[6] (Wr. tr.).

Though the *paññā-vimutta* and *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahats are equal with respect to release from suffering, special regard extends to the latter, and the greater his facility in meditation the higher the regard. Thus the Buddha says:

---

1. *Ibid.* 114.

2. AN. 4:314-15. AN. 5:337.

3. MN. 1:213-15.

4. SN. 3:235-38.

5. MN. Sutta No. lll.

6. "Passa… ete tayo kulaputtā bahujanahitāya paṭipannā bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya, atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānanti." MN. 1:211.

> When a monk has mastered these eight deliverances in direct order, in reverse order, and in both orders, when he can attain to and emerge from any one of them, whenever he chooses, wherever he chooses and for as long as he chooses – when too, with the destruction of the cankers, he enters and abides in the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, after realizing it for himself here and now through direct knowledge – then such a monk is called one liberated in both ways. There is no other liberation in both ways higher and more excellent than this liberation in both ways.[1] (Wr. tr.).

The highest respect goes to those monks who possess not only liberation in both ways but the six *abhiññās*, the first five the outcome of the eight attainments of serenity, the sixth, the supramundane *abhiññā* of arahatship, the outcome of insight. The Buddha declares that a monk endowed with the six *abhiññās* is worthy of gifts and hospitality, worthy of offerings and reverential salutations, a supreme field of merit for the world.[2] In the period after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, the Venerable Ānanda was asked whether the Buddha had designated a successor, to which he replied in the negative. He also denied that the Sangha had selected a single monk to be its leader. However, he said, there were monks in the Order who were regarded with special reverence and esteem, and to whom other monks looked for guidance and support. What qualified a monk to give guidance to others was endowment with ten qualities: moral virtue, learning, contentment, mastery over the four *jhānas*, the five mundane *abhiññās*, and attainment of the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom.[3] Perhaps it was because he was extolled by the Buddha for his facility in the meditative attainments and the *abhiññās* that the Venerable Mahākassapa assumed the presidency of the first great Buddhist council held in Rājagaha after the Buddha's passing away.[4]

In the Ambaṭṭha Sutta the Buddha recites a verse praising the man endowed with knowledge and conduct (*vijjācaraṇasampanna*): "The *kshatriya* is the best among men for those who look to lineage, but one endowed with knowledge and conduct is best among gods and men."[5] (Wr. tr.). Conduct (*caraṇa*), he explains, includes moral discipline, sense restraint, mindfulness and discernment, contentment, solitary living, the abandonment of the five hindrances, and finally, as the outcome of these practices, the attainment of the four *jhānas*. Knowledge (*vijjā*) consists in insight-knowledge, the knowledge of the mind-made body, the five mundane *abhiññās*, and the knowledge of

---

1. "Yato kho Ānanda bhikkhu ime aṭṭha vimokhe anulomaṃ pi samāpajjati, paṭilomaṃ pi samāpajjati, anuloma-paṭilomaṃ pi samāpajjati, yath'icchakaṃ yad icchikaṃ yāvad icchakaṃ samāpajjati pi vuṭṭhāti pi, āsavānaṃ ca khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññā-vimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati, ayaṃ vuccati Ānanda bhikkhu ubhatobhāga-vimutto, imāya ca Ānanda ubhato-bhāgavimuttiyā aññā ubhato-bhāga-vimutti uttaritarā vā paṇītatarā vā n'atthī ti." DN. 2:71.

2. AN. 3:280-81.

3. MN. 3:11-12.

4. SN. 3:209-214.

5. "Khattiyo seṭṭho janetasmiṃ ye gotta paṭisārino/Vijjācaraṇa-sampanno so seṭṭho deva-mānuse." DN. 1:99.

the destruction of the cankers. The Buddha concludes his exposition by saying of a bhikkhu who has fulfilled this training:

> This bhikkhu is called ‘endowed with knowledge’, ‘endowed with conduct’, ‘endowed with knowledge and conduct’. There is no other endowment with knowledge and conduct higher or more excellent than this endowment with knowledge and conduct.[1] (Wr. tr.).

1. “Ayaṃ vuccati Ambaṭṭha bhikkhu vijjā-sampanno iti pi caraṇasampanno iti pi vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno iti pi. Imāya ca Ambaṭṭha vijjā-caraṇa-sampadāya aññā vijjāsampadā caraṇa-sampadā uttaritarā vā paṇītatarā vā n’atthi.” DN. 1:100.

Conclusion

The *jhānas* are an important aspect of training in the contemplative system of Theravāda Buddhism, representing the most eminent form of concentration (*samādhi*). They enter into the discipline as the training in the higher consciousness (*adhicittasikkhā*), into the Noble Eightfold Path as right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*), and directly or indirectly relate to all the thirty-seven training principles leading to enlightenment. Of the two principal types of Buddhist meditation, serenity meditation (*samathabhāvanā*) and insight meditation (*vipassanābhāvanā*), they fall on the side of serenity, though the mental unification they induce makes them also a helpful instrument for developing insight.

The purpose of this dissertation has been to investigate the function performed by the *jhānas* in the structure of the Buddhist path to liberation. We approached this topic in terms of two specific problems: [1] to understand how the *jhānas* bring about a progressive purification of consciousness and a focussing of the power of awareness; and [2] to determine the precise way and extent to which this mental unification effected by the *jhānas* facilitates the attainment of *nibbāna*, the ultimate goal of Buddhist meditation.

Our account of the function of the *jhānas* was based upon the recognition that the *jhānas* can occur at two levels, one mundane (*lokiya*) and the other supramundane (*lokuttara*). As mundane they pertain to the preliminary stages of the path leading up to insight where they can be developed to any of eight degrees, the four fine material *jhānas* (*rūpajjhāna*) and the four immaterial *jhānas* (*arūpajjhāna*). As supramundane they pertain to the four paths (*magga*) and fruits (*phala*), the stages of enlightenment and liberation leading to *nibbāna*, the end of suffering.

The mundane *jhānas* are not absolutely necessary for all practitioners, but on account of the powerful calm they induce the Buddha frequently commends them to his disciples. The Buddhist training progresses through three stages – morality, concentration, and wisdom. Wisdom leads directly to liberation, but it can only arise in the mind that has been collected and purified by concentration. *Jhāna*, as a superior form of concentration, helps to produce this purification needed as a base for wisdom.

We clarified the way the *jhānas* work to purify the mind by drawing upon the analytical approach to mental processes developed in the psychology of Theravāda Buddhism. From this perspective we saw the mind viewed as an ever-changing continuum of evanescent mental events, each event in turn being composed of a multiplicity of factors. Certain factors cause defilement and distraction, others bring about purification and inner unity. By developing the mind in deliberate ways according to the system of meditation it is possible to pit the latter factors against the former and eventually overcome them. The *jhānas* are the fruits of this conquest.

The factors which obstruct mental clarity are classed as the five hindrances – sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. A meditator aspiring to the *jhānas*, after purifying his moral discipline, cutting off impediments, and receiving a suitable subject from a teacher, must first overcome the hindrances. The texts prescribe various methods for achieving this, some designed specifically for the individual defilements, others such as general mindfulness applicable to all the

hindrances at once. As he persists in his practice of meditation the meditator strengthens five positive mental factors – applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness. These five serve to counteract the hindrances and unify the mind on its object. When the hindrances are suppressed, there appears a luminous mental replica of the meditation subject called the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*), marking the attainment of "access concentration" (*upacārasamādhi*) where the mind stands at the threshold of *jhāna*. With further strengthening of the *jhāna* factors the meditator passes to *appanāsamādhi*, full absorption. The initial level of absorption is the first *jhāna*, which is endowed with the five *jhāna* factors as its defining constituents.

After mastering the first *jhāna* a meditator can go further in the direction of serenity by attaining the second, third, and fourth *jhānas*. Progress from one *jhāna* to another, we saw, is handled by the Theravāda expositors with the same psychological rigor they apply to the initial attainment. The ascent through the four fine material *jhānas* involves the successive elimination of coarser mental factors. In each case the meditator reflects that the *jhāna* he has mastered is endangered by its proximity to the stage immediately below and by its own inherent grossness, then he aspires to the higher stage as more serene, peaceful, and sublime. Thus he eliminates applied and sustained thought to reach the second *jhāna*, rapture to reach the third, and happiness to reach the fourth. The factors that remain function as the constituting factors of the *jhāna* – rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness for the second, happiness and one-pointedness for the third, and neutral feeling and one-pointedness for the fourth. If the meditator's faculties are not sharp, he may have to overcome applied and sustained thought separately. To account for this possibility the Abhidhamma, with its penchant for precise analysis, includes a scheme of five *jhānas* covering the same range of meditative experience.

After achieving mastery over the four fine material *jhānas*, an ardent meditator can continue to refine his concentration by attaining the four immaterial *jhānas*: the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception. Whereas the purification of consciousness effected by the lower *jhānas* takes place by means of the successive elimination of mental factors, the purification effected by progress through the immaterial *jhānas* occurs through a surmounting of objects. All four immaterial states have the same factorial constitution, identical with that of the fourth *jhāna* i.e. neutral feeling and one-pointedness. They differ essentially with respect to their objective basis, taking in order successively more subtle objects. The first objectifies the infinity of space, the second the consciousness pertaining to the base of boundless space, the third the non-existent aspect of the same consciousness, and the fourth the mental aggregates belonging to the base of nothingness. This last *āruppa*, the base of neither perception nor non-perception, marks the utmost limit in the unification of consciousness and the highest degree to which serenity can be pursued.

If he so desires, a meditator who has thoroughly mastered the eight attainments can develop certain supernormal modes of knowledge. These, known as the *abhiññās*, are five in number: the knowledge of the modes of supernormal power, the knowledge of the divine ear-element, the knowledge of penetrating others' minds, the knowledge of recollecting previous lives, and the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings. These *abhiññās* are all mundane, the products of concentration. Though not essential to the path, they are still embellishments of an accomplished meditator, useful

if handled with understanding and applied with compassion. Along with them other kinds of higher knowledge are sometimes mentioned. Beyond these lies a sixth *abhiññā*, the "knowledge of the destruction of the cankers," the knowledge of liberation resulting from insight.

The mundane *jhānas* do not destroy the defilements but only suppress them. The type of purification they produce is thus only temporary, suitable as a basis for insight but incapable by itself of leading to liberation. A meditator who has reached the eight attainments will be reborn according to his level of *jhānic* accomplishment. If he reaches the four lower *jhānas* he will be reborn in the fine material world, if he reaches the immaterial *jhānas* he will be reborn in the immaterial world. In any case he remains in bondage to *saṃsāra* and is not yet free from suffering. Therefore *jhāna*, we showed, is not sufficient for reaching the ultimate goal.

To obtain liberation from the recurring cycle of rebirths what is required is wisdom (*paññā*), culminating in the supramundane wisdom of the noble paths that eradicates defilements. Since the root-cause of bondage and suffering is ignorance about the true nature of phenomena, wisdom, which uncovers the true nature of phenomena, is the means to freedom. Wisdom comes in two stages: first the wisdom of insight (*vipassanāñāṇa*) which is the direct seeing of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness in material and mental formations, then the wisdom of the noble paths (*maggañāṇa*) which sees *nibbāna* and penetrates the Four Noble Truths.

The complete course of development culminating in deliverance has been divided into seven stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*). The first two – purification of morality and purification of mind – coincide with the training in moral discipline and concentration. The remaining five – purification of view, purification by overcoming doubt, purification by knowledge of the right and wrong paths, purification by knowledge and vision of the way, and purification by knowledge and vision – pertain to the development of wisdom. The wisdom of insight develops especially through the purification by knowledge and vision of the way; it culminates in the wisdom of the supramundane paths, which make up purification by knowledge and vision.

The four paths are designated the path of stream-entry, the path of the once-returner, the path of the non-returner, and the path of arahatship. These paths are occasions of enlightenment experience which penetrate by direct knowledge the Four Noble Truths. They exercise the function of eradicating the defilements or "fetters" that cause bondage to *saṃsāra*, reducing thereby the duration of the round of rebirths. Each successive path eliminates (or attenuates) a subtler layer of defilements, until with the fourth path all the defilements are cut off and the production of future rebirths stopped. The paths lead immediately to their fruits, resultant states of consciousness that enjoy the happiness of *nibbāna* made possible by the work of the paths.

The consideration that mundane *jhāna* does not suffice for attaining liberation but has to be supplemented by wisdom brought us to our second area of investigation, the relation of the *jhānas* to the attainment of the paths and the states of deliverance that result from them. In particular we sought to resolve the disputed question whether or not the *jhānas* are needed for reaching *nibbāna*. The key to resolving this controversy we found to be the distinction, implicit in the suttas and made explicit in the Abhidhamma and commentaries, between mundane and supramundane *jhāna*. Mundane *jhāna* is the most

eminent type of concentration, but its attainment is not indispensable for all meditators in order to reach the paths and fruits. The Theravāda tradition divides meditators into two types according to the way they arrive at the supramundane path. One is the *samathayānika*, the practitioner who makes serenity his vehicle, the other is the *vipassanāyānika*, the practitioner who makes bare insight his vehicle. The former first develops serenity to the level of one of the eight attainments or their access, then uses that serenity as his base of concentration in order to develop insight. The latter, also known as the dry insight worker (*sukkhavipassaka*), proceeds directly to insight-contemplation on conditioned phenomena, producing a mobile momentary concentration as a concomitant of his contemplation without initially developing serenity to the level of *jhānic* intensity.

For the dry insight meditator, we saw, mundane *jhāna* is dispensable, but for the meditator of the serenity vehicle it plays two vitally important roles: first it provides him with a foundation of calm conducive to developing insight, second it serves as a readily available subject to be investigated with insight in order to see the three characteristics of existence. In the first capacity the *jhāna* is called the basic *jhāna* (*pādakajjhāna*), in the second it is called the comprehended *jhāna* (*sammasitajjhāna*).

For meditators of both vehicles, however, *jhāna* is attained when they reach the supramundane paths and fruits. The paths and fruits, according to the Pāli texts, always occur at a level of *jhānic* absorption and thus are considered forms of *jhāna*. Since to reach deliverance all practitioners have to pass through the same paths and fruits regardless of their means of approach, *jhāna* of the supramundane kind enters into the experience of every meditator who arrives at the path. It belongs as much to the path of the one following the vehicle of pure insight as it does to the path of the one following the vehicle of serenity. *Jhāna* of this kind occurs as the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) of the Noble Eightfold Path, defined by the Buddha with the formula for the four *jhānas*.

Thus the answer to the question whether *jhāna* is needed to reach *nibbāna* is clear, settled by the recognition of two kinds of *jhāna*: mundane *jhāna* is helpful but not absolutely necessary, supramundane *jhāna* is essential but does not necessarily pre-suppose mundane *jhāna*. It results from insight either alone or in combination with mundane *jhāna*.

The supramundane *jhānas* occur in the same degrees as the mundane, the four of the suttanta scheme and the five of the Abhidhamma scheme. Each has the *jhāna* factors appropriate to its particular level of absorption. Nevertheless, we found that certain significant differences separate the two types of *jhāna*. The mundane *jhānas* merely suppress defilements, the supramundane eradicate them. The mundane remain in the orbit of the round of rebirths, the supramundane dismantle the round. The mundane involve a predominance of serenity, the supramundane a balance of serenity with wisdom. The mundane take an idea or image for object, the supramundane the unconditioned reality, *nibbāna*.

One question that has arisen is what determines the *jhānic* level of the paths and fruits, but the Theravāda tradition has not settled this with unanimity. Some elders hold that it is the basic *jhāna* (*pādakajjhāna*), some that it is the comprehended *jhāna* (*samma-sitajjhāna*), still others that it depends on the meditator's choice. The *jhānic* level of the

fruit, however, always conforms to that of the path. Each noble person of the four levels retains access to supramundane *jhāna* as the attainment of fruition (*phalasamāpatti*) appropriate to his level. Thus the four noble persons are always capable of entering supramundane *jhāna* as a way of experiencing bliss and peace here and now. In addition non-returners and arahats who have mastered the eight attainments can enter a special meditative attainment called cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*), reached by alternating the mundane *jhānas* with insight up the eight degrees to the point where the mental process stops.

One final problem that remained concerned the relation of the noble persons (*ariyapuggala*) to the mundane accomplishment of *jhāna*. This problem we addressed through an ancient classification of the noble persons into seven types on the basis of their dominant faculties. Those on the path of stream-entry divide into two – the faith-follower (*saddhānusāri*) and the truth-follower (*dhammānusāri*) – according to whether they give prominence to faith or wisdom. These become, respectively, the one liberated by faith (*saddhāvimutta*) and the one attained to understanding (*diṭṭhipatta*) in the six intermediate stages; one who gains the immaterial *jhānas* is classified separately as a body-witness (*kāyasakkhi*). Arahats, at the last stage, again divide into two: those who obtain the immaterial attainments are called liberated in both ways (*ubhatobhāgavimutta*), those who do not obtain them are called those liberated by wisdom (*paññāvimutta*). For these latter any of the three faculties – faith, concentration, or wisdom – can be dominant. All that keeps them in this class is lack of the immaterial *jhānas*. They may have any of the four *jhānas* or none at all.

Doubt has sometimes been cast on the possibility of arahatship without *jhāna*. But we found that although all arahats possess the *jhāna* of their supramundane fruition, they are not all regarded as having mundane *jhāna*. Theravāda tradition recognizes a class of dry-visioned arahats who reach their goal by pure insight without *jhāna*, remaining devoid of mundane *jhāna* even afterwards. Nevertheless, though arahatship without mundane *jhāna* is possible, we saw that the Pāli tradition, beginning with the suttas ascribed to the Buddha himself, regards the ability to gain the four *jhānas* without strain or difficulty as a valuable asset of an arahat. The acquisition of the *jhānas* is valued both as a personal accomplishment and as a testimony to the spiritual efficacy of the Buddha's dispensation. A similar high regard extends to the achievement of the five mundane *abhiññās*, while the highest praise goes to *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahats who have mastered both the eight deliverances and the five *abhiññās*.

The gradations in the veneration given to arahats on the basis of their mundane spiritual achievements implies something about the value-system of Theravāda Buddhism. It suggests that while final liberation may be the ultimate and most important value, it is not the sole value even in the spiritual domain. Alongside it, as embellishments rather than alternatives, stand mastery over the range of the mind and mastery over the sphere of the knowable. The first is accomplished by the attainment of the eight mundane *jhānas*, the second by the attainment of the *abhiññās*. Together, final liberation adorned with this twofold mastery is esteemed as the highest and most desirable way of actualizing the ultimate goal.

Appendix 1

The Thirty-seven Constituents of Enlightenment (*sattatiṃsa bodhipakkhiyadhammā*)

I. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*cattaro satipaṭṭhānā*)

1. Contemplation of the body as a foundation of mindfulness (*kayānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*)
2. Contemplation of feelings as a foundation of mindfulness (*vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*)
3. Contemplation of states of mind as a foundation of mindfulness (*cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*)
4. Contemplation of mental objects as a foundation of mindfulness (*dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*)

II. The Four Right Endeavors (*cattāro sammappadhānā*)

1. The effort to prevent unarisen evil states (*anuppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ anuppādāya vāyāma*)
2. The effort to abandon arisen evil states (*uppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya vāyāma*)
3. The effort to arouse unarisen wholesome states (*anuppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ uppādāya vāyāma*)
4. The effort to increase arisen wholesome states (*uppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ bhiyyobhāvāya vāyāma*)

III. The Four Bases of Success (*cattāro iddhipādā*)

1. The base of success consisting in zeal (*chandiddhipādā*)
2. The base of success consisting in energy (*viriyiddhipādā*)
3. The base of success consisting in consciousness (*cittiddhipādā*)
4. The base of success consisting in inquiry (*vīmaṃsiddhipādā*)

IV. The Five Spiritual Faculties (*pañcindriyāni*)

1. The faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*)
2. The faculty of energy (*viriyindriya*)
3. The faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*)
4. The faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*)
5. The faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*)

V. The Five Spiritual Powers (*pañca balāni*)

1. The power of faith (*saddhābala*)
2. The power of energy (*viriyabala*)
3. The power of mindfulness (*satibala*)
4. The power of concentration (*samādhibala*)
5. The power of wisdom (*paññābala*)

VI. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*satta bojjhaṅgā*)

1. The mindfulness factor of enlightenment (*satisambojjhaṅgā*)
2. The investigation of phenomena factor of enlightenment (*dhammavicaya sambojjhaṅgā*)
3. The energy factor of enlightenment (*viriyasambojjhaṅgā*)
4. The rapture factor of enlightenment (*pītisambojjhaṅgā*)
5. The tranquility factor of enlightenment (*passaddhisambojjhaṅgā*)
6. The concentration factor of enlightenment (*samādhisambojjhaṅgā*
7. The equanimity factor of enlightenment (*upekkhāsambojjhaṅgā*)

VII. The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgikamgga*)

1. Right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*)
2. Right intention (*sammāsaṃkappa*)
3. Right speech (*sammāvācā*)
4. Right action (*sammākammanta*)
5. Right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*)
6. Right effort (*sammāvāyāma*)
7. Right mindfulness (*sammāsati*)
8. Right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*)[1]

[1] DN. 2:120. MN. 2:11-12.

Appendix 2

Forty Subjects of Meditation[1]

Subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*)	6 Temperaments (*chacaritāni*)	3 Concentrations (*tayo bhāvanāyo*)			3 Signs (*tīni nimittāni*)			4 *Jhānas*		
The Totalities (*kasiṇa*)										
Earth kasina (*paṭhavi-kasiṇa*)	All	P.	Ac.	Ab.	P.	Le.	Cp.	1st	to	4th[2]
Water kasina (*āpo-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Fire kasina (*tejo-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Air kasina (*vāyo-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Blue kasina (*nīla-kasiṇa*)	Hating	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Yellow kasina (*pīta-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Red kasina (*lohita-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
White kasina (*odāta-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Light kasina (*āloka-kasiṇa*)	All	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Limited space kasina (*ākāsa-kasiṇa*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Ten Kinds of Foulness (*dasa asubha*):										
The bloated (*uddhumātaka*)	Lustful	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
The livid (*vinīlaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
Festering (*vipubbaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
Cut-up (*vicchiddaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		

[1] Vism., pp. 89-90.

[2] Note. Key to abbreviations at end of this appendix.

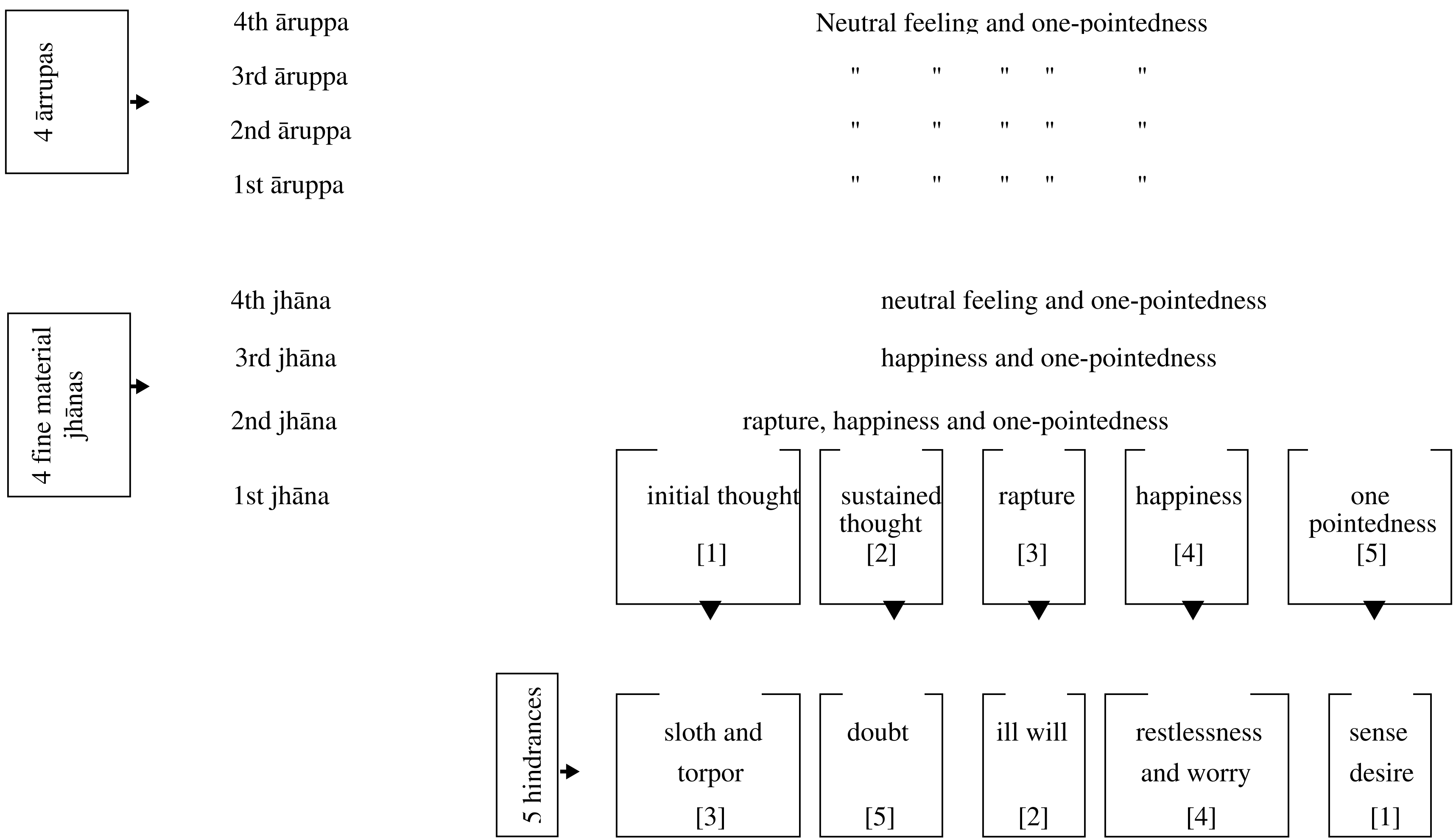
Subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*)	6 Temperaments (*chacaritāni*)	3 Concentrations (*tayo bhāvanāyo*)			3 Signs (*tīni nimittāni*)			4 *Jhānas*		
		P.	Ac.	Ab.	P.	Le.	Cp.			
The gnawed (*vikkhāyitaka*)	Lustful	P.	Ac.	Ab.	P.	Le.	Cp.	1st		
The scattered (*vikkhittaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
The hacked and scattered (*hata-vikkhittaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
The bleeding (*lohitaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
The worm-infested (*pulavaka*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
A skeleton (*aṭṭhika*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
Ten Kinds of Recollections (*dasa anussatiyo*):										
Recol. of Buddha (*buddhānussati*)	Faithful	"	"		"	"		No	*jhāna*	
Recol. of Dhamma (*dhammānussati*)	"	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Recol. of Sangha (*sanghānussati*)	"	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Recol. of virtue (*sīlānussati*)	"	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Recol. of generosity (*cāgānussati*)	"	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Recol. of deities (*devatānussati*)	"	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Recol. of peace (*upasamānussati*)	Intelligent	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Recol. of death (*maraṇānussati*)	"	"	"		"	"		"	"	
Mindfulness of body (*kāya-gatāsati*)	Lustful	"	"	"	"	"	"	1st	"	
Mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*)	Deluded & Speculative	"	"	"	"	"	"	1st	to	4th
Four Divine Abidings (*cattāro brahmavihārā*):										
Lovingkindness (*mettā*)	Hating	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3rd
Compassion (*karunā*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Gladness (*muditā*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Equanimity (*upekkhā*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"			4th

Subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*)	6 Temperaments (*chacaritāni*)	3 Concentrations (*tayo bhāvanāyo*)			3 Signs (*tīni nimittāni*)		4 *Jhānas*		
One Perception (*ekā saññā*):									
Perception of repulsiveness in nutriment (*āhāre paṭikkūla-saññā*)	Intelligent	P.	Ac.		P.	Le.	No	*jhāna*	
One Definition (*ekāvavatthānā*)	"	"	"		"	"	"	"	
Defining of the four elements (*catudhātuvavatthānā*)	"	"	"		"	"	"	"	
Four Immaterial States (*cattāro āruppā*)	"	"	"		"	"	"	"	
The base consisting of boundless space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*)	All	P.	Ac.	Ab.	"	"	Arūpajjhāna		
The base consisting of boundless consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
The base consisting of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		
The base consisting of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"		1

1 Six temperaments: [1] lustful (*rāgacarita*); [2] hating (*dosacarita*), [3] deluded (*mohacarita*), [4] faithful (*saddhācarita*), [5] intelligent (*buddhicarita*), and [6] speculative (*vitakkacarita*). Three concentrations: [1] preliminary (*parikamma*), [2] access (*upacāra*), and [3] absorption (*appaṇā*). Three signs: [1] preliminary (*parikamma*), [2] learning (*uggaha*), and [3] counterpart (*paṭibhāga*). *P* = preliminary; *Ac* = access; *Ab* = absorption; *Le* = learning; *Cp* = counterpart sign.

Appendix 3

The Eight Attainments:[3] **Jhāna Factors:**



[3] Read from the bottom. *Jhāna* factors in Pali: *vitakha*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā* and *adukkhamasukhā vedanā*. Five hindrances: *kāmacchanda*, *byāpāda*, *thīnamiddha*, *uddhacca-kukkucca* and *vicikicchā*. Arrows indicate the hindrances suppressed by each factor of the first *jhāna*. Note that as the meditator reaches higher *jhānas* he eliminates lower *jhāna* factors. The factors of the fourth fine material *jhāna* are the same as those of the immaterial *jhānas.*

Appendix 4

Kamma and Rebirth[4]

Kinds of kamma:		**Places of rebirth (*bhūmi*)**		
Immaterial kammas (*arūpāvacarajjhāna*)	Base of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*) Base of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*) Base of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*) Base of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*)	Immaterial spheres (*arūpāvacara bhūmi*)	31. Plane of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññā-yatana bhūmi*) 30. Plane of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana bhūmi*) 29. Plane of inifite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana bhūmi*) 28. Plane of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana bhūmi*)	Immaterial spheres (*arūpāvacarabhūmi*)
Fine material kammas (*rūpāvacarajjhāna*)	Fourth *jhāna* (*catutthajjhāna*)	Fine material spheres (*rūpāvacara bhūmi*)	27. The highest realm (*akaṇiṭṭha bhūmi*) 26. The clear sighted realm (*sudassa bhūmi*) 25. The beautiful realm (*sudassi bhūmi*) 24. The serene realm (*atappa bhūmi*) 23. The durable realm (*aviha bhūmi*)	5 pure abodes (*pañca suddhavasa*) — 4th *jhāna* spheres (*C. J. bhūmi*)
			22. The realm of non-percipient beings (*asaññasatta bhūmi*) 21. The realm of great reward (*vehapphala-bhūmi*)	4th *jhāna* spheres (*C. J. bhūmi*)
	Third *jhāna* (*tatiyajjhāna*)		20. The realm of steady aura (*subhakiṇha-bhūmi*) 19. The realm of infinite aura (*appamāna-subha bhūmi*) 18. The realm of minor aura (*parittasubha-bhūmi*)	3rd *jhāna* sphere (*t. jh. bhūmi*)

[4] Read from the bottom.

Kinds of kamma:[1]

Fine material kammas (*rūpāvacarajjhāna*)

- Second *jhāna* (*dutiyajjhāna*)
- First *jhāna* (*paṭhamajjhāna*)

Sense sphere wholesome kamma (*kāmāvacara kusala kamma*)

- Sense sphere wholesome kamma (*kāmāvacara kusala kamma*)

Unwholesome kamma (*akusalakamma*)

Places of rebirth (*bhūmi*)

Fine material spheres (*rūpāvacara bhūmi*)

17. The realm of radiant luster (*ābhassara bhūmi*)
16. The realm of infinite luster (*appamānābha bhūmi*)
15. The realm of minor luster (*parittābha bhūmi*)

14. The realm of the great Brahmā (*Mahābrahma bhūmi*)
13. The realm of the ministers of Brahmā (*Brahmapurohita bhūmi*)
12. The realm of the retinue of Brahmā (*Brahmapārisajja bhūmi*)

Seven fortunate sense spheres (*sattakāma sugati*)

11. The realm of gods who lord over the creation of others (*paranimmitavasavatti bhūmi*)
10. The realm of gods who rejoice in their own creation (*nimmānarati bhūmi*)
9. The realm of delight (*tusita bhūmi*)
8. The realm of Yama gods (*Yāma bhūmi*)
7. The realm of thirty-three gods (*tāvatiṃsa bhūmi*)
6. The realm of the four great kings (*cātummahārājika bhūmi*)
5. Human realm (*manussaloka*)

4 unfortunate planes (4 *apāya bhūmi*)

4. The host of titans (*asuranikāya*)
3. The hungry ghosts (*petaloka*)
2. The animal kingdom (*tiracchānayoni*)
1. Woeful states of existence (*nirayabhūmi*)[2]

[1]Read from the bottom.

[2]Nārada, *Manual*, pp. 233-55, 259-62.

Glossary

Abhijjamāna	unbroken
Abhiññā	direct knowledge
Abyāpajja	free from trouble
Ādesanā	manifestation
Adhicitta	higher consciousness
Adhipaññā	higher wisdom
Adhisīla	higher morality
Ādīnava	danger, unsatisfactoriness
Adukkhamasukha	neither-pain-nor-pleasure
Āhāra	nutriment
Ajjhupekkhana	equanimity
Akallatā	indisposition
Akammaññatā	unwieldiness
Akaṇiṭṭha	the highest realm
Ākāraparivitakka	reflection on reason
Ākāravatī	rational
Ākāsānañcāyatana	the base of boundless space
Ākiñcaññāyatana	the base of nothingness
Akusala	unwholesome
Amanasikāra	non-attention
Anāgāmi	non-returner
Anāgataṃsañāṇa	knowledge of the future
Anaññātaññassāmitindriya	the faculty of 'I shall know the unknown'
Ananta	unbounded
Ānāpānasati	mindfulness of breathing
Anattā	selfless, non-self
Aṅga	factor
Anicca	impermanent
Animitta	signless
Aññātavindriya	the faculty of the completion of final knowledge
Aññindriya	the faculty of final knowledge
Anubhavana	experiencing
Anuloma	conformity
Anupādisesanibbānadhātu	the nibbāna element without residue

Anupassanā	contemplation
Anupāyamanasikāra	inexpedient reflection, reflection on wrong track
Anupubbasaṅkhāranirodha	the gradual cessation of formation
Anusāsana	education or instruction
Anussati	recollection
Apacayagāmi	leading to demolition
Aparihāniya	invincible
Aparisesa	without remainder
Apāyabhūmi	the plane of misery
Apilāpanatā	not floating away
Appamānābha	the realm of infinite luster
Appamānasubha	the realm of infinite aura
Appanā	absorption
Appanihita	desireless
Arahat	a perfectly enlightened individual (untranslated)
Ārambhadhātu	element of effort
Ārammaṇa	object
Ariya	noble; a noble one
Āruppa	immaterial state
Arūpāvacarabhūmi	immaterial sphere
Asaṅkhata	unconditioned
Asaṅkheyya	incalculable
Asaññasatta	the realm of non-percipient beings
Asāraka	coreless
Āsava	canker
Āsavakkhayañāṇa	knowledge of the destruction of the cankers
Assāda	gratification
Asubha	foulness
Asurakāya	the host of titans
Atappa	the serene realm
Atītabhavaṅga	past moment of life continuum
Attanodhammatāya	by one’s own nature
Aṭṭhakathā	commentaries
Āvajjana	adverting
Aveccappasāda	confidence born of understanding
Āvībhāva	appearance

Aviha	the durable realm
Avijjā	ignorance
Bala	power
Bhaṅga	dissolution
Bhava	existence, becoming
Bhāvanā	development
Bhavaṅga	life continuum
Bhavaṅgupaccheda	cutting off or arrest of the passive consciousness
Bhaya	fear, fearful, terror
Bhūmi	plane, realm
Bojjhaṅga	enlightenment factor
Brahmapārisajja	retinue of Brahma
Brahmavihāra	divine abiding
Byāpāda	ill will
Candimā	moon
Caraṇa	conduct
Carita	temperament
Cātummahārājika	the realm of the four great kings
Cetasika	mental factor
Cetopariyañāṇa	the knowledge of others' mind
Cetovimutti	liberation of mind
Chanda	zeal
Citta	mind, consciousness
Cittavīthi	active process of consciousness
Cutūpapātañāṇa	the knowledge of passing away and rebirth of beings
Dassana	vision
Dhamma	[1] doctrine, truth; [2] mental object, phenomena
Dhammacchando	desire for dhamma
Dhammānusāri	truth-devotee
Dhātumanasikāra	reflection on the modes of materiality
Dibbacakkhu	the divine eye
Dibbasotadhātu	the divine ear-element
Dibbavihāra	heavenly dwelling
Diṭṭhadhammanibbāna	nibbāna here and now
Diṭṭhi.	views, wrong views
Diṭṭhippatta	attained to understanding

Domanassa	grief
Dosa	hatred
Ekaggatā	one-pointedness (of mind)
Ekodibhāva	unification (of mind)
Gantha	bodily ties
Garuka	weighty
Gotrabhū	change-of-lineage
Hadayarūpa	the matter of the heart
Iddhi	wonder or marvel
Iddhividhañāṇa	knowledge of the modes of supernormal powers
Indriya	faculty
Indriyasammattapaṭipādana	balancing the spiritual faculties
Indriyasaṃvara	the restraint of the senses
Jhāna	states of absorption in meditation [untranslated]
Jhānaṅga	jhana factor
Jhānakkantika	skipping alternate jhanas
Jhāyati	thinks
Kalāpasammasana	comprehension by groups
Kalyāṇamitta	good friend
Kāma	sense pleasure; sensual desire
Kāmacchanda	sensual desire
Kāmapariḷāha	the fever of sensuality
Kāmapariyesanā	the search for sensual gratification
Kamati	travels
Kāmāvacara	sense sphere
Kamma	volitional action [untranslated]
Kāmūpādāna	clinging to sense pleasure
Kasiṇa	a device used as an object of concentration [untranslated]
Kasiṇukkantika	skipping alternate kasina
Kattukamyatā	desire to accomplish some aim
Kāya	body
Kāyasakkhi	body-witness
Kāyaviveka	bodily seclusion
Khandha	aggregates
Khaṇika	momentary
Khaya	destruction

Khuddika	minor
Kilesa	defilement
Kukkucca	worry
Kusala	wholesome
Kusalacittassekaggatā	wholesome one-pointedness of mind
Lakkhaṇa	characteristics
Lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna	the contemplation of the characteristics of phenomena
Lobha	greed
Lokiya	mundane
Lokuttara	supramundane
Magga	path
Mahāpurisavitakka	thoughts of a great man
Māna	conceit
Manodvāra	mind door
Manomayiddhiñāṇa	knowledge of the mind-created body
Manussaloka	the human world
Micchāsamādhi	wrong concentration
Middha	torpor
Moha	delusion
Nāma	mentality
Nāmarūpa	mentality-materiality
Ñāṇa	knowledge
Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana	the base of neither perception nor non-perception
Nibbāna	[untranslated]
Nibbidā	dispassion
Niggaha	restraining
Nikkamadhātu	element of exertion
Nimittavaḍḍhana	extension of sign
Nimmāṇarati	rejoicing in one's own creation
Nirāmisasukha	spiritual happiness
Niraya	woeful state
Nirodha	cessation
Nirujjhati	ceases
Nīvaraṇa	hindrance
Niyyānika	emancipating
Ogha	floods

Okkantika	showering
Orambhāgiva	pertaining to the lower worlds
Paccattaṃ	within oneself (within themselves)
Paccavekkhaṇa	reviewing
Paccayaṭṭhāna	objective station
Paccekabuddha	individual or silent Buddha [untranslated]
Paccupaṭṭhāna	manifestation
Pāda	basis
Pādakajjhāna	basic jhana
Paggaha	exerting the mind
Pahāna	abandonment
Pahānaṅga	factors of abandonment
Pajānana	the act of understanding
Pakkhapātita	partiality
Pakkhi	bird
Palibodha	impediment
Pallaṅka	sitting cross-legged
Pāmojja	gladness
Pañca	five
Pāṇi	hand
Paññā	wisdom
Paññatti	a conceptual entity
Paññāvimutta	liberated by wisdom
Paññāvimutti	liberation by wisdom
Papañca	impediments
Parakkamadhātu	element of striving
Paranimmitavasavatti	the realm of gods who lord over the creations of others
Pariggaha	discerning
Parikammanimitta	preliminary sign
Parikammasamādhi	preliminary concentration
Parikkhāra	requisites
Parimajjati	strokes
Parimasati	touches
Parinibbāna	final nibbāna
Pariññā	full understanding

Parittābha	the realm of minor luster
Parittasubha	the realm of minor aura
Parivitakka	reflection
Pariyāyena	figuratively
Passaddhi	tranquility
Paṭibhāganimitta	counterpart sign
Paṭigha	aversion
Piṭihāriya	wonder
Paṭiloma	reverse order
Paṭisaṃvedeti	experiences
Pavivekasukha	happiness born of seclusion from sense pleasures and the hindrances
Pettivisaya	the sphere of tormented spirits or “hungry ghosts”
Phala	fruit, fruition
Pharaṇa	pervading
Phassa	contact
Pīti	rapture
Pubbaṅgama	forerunner
Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa	the knowledge of recollecting previous lives
Puggala	individual
Puggalajjhāsaya	inclination of individuals
Purecārika	precursor
Puthujjana	the ordinary man
Rāga	lust
Rasa	function
Rūpa	material form
Rūpāvacara	fine material sphere
Sabbacittasādhāraṇa	universal concomitant of consciousness
Sabhāva	the true nature
Sacchikiriya	realization
Saddhā	faith
Saddhānusārī	faith-devotee
Saddhāpadānāni	foundations of faith
Saddhāvimutta	liberated by faith
Sakadāgāmi	Once-returner
Sakkāyadiṭṭhi	personality-view
Sakuṇa	bird

Samādhi	concentration
Samādhikkhandha	group of concentration
Samannāgataṅgāni	factors of possession
Samantapāsādikā	completely inspiring
Samāpatti	attainment
Samatha	serenity
Samathayānika	one who makes serenity his vehicle
Samatikkama	having surmounted
Saṃkappa	intention
Sammā	right
Sammasana	comprehension
Sammasitajjhāna	comprehended jhana
Sampahaṅsana	encouraging
Sampajañña	discernment
Sampasādana	confidence
Saṃsāra	the round of repeated becoming
Samucchedappahāna	abandonment by eradication
Saṃvara	restraint
Saṃvatteti	exercises
Saṃyojana	fetter
Sandiṭṭhikanibbāna	immediately visible nibbāna
Sañjānana	the mode of perceiving
Saṅkantika	transposition
Saṅkappa	intention
Saṃkhāra	[1] formation, [2] mental formation, [3] volitional formation
Saññā	perception
Santuṭṭhi	contentment
Sati	mindfulness
Satipaṭṭhāna	foundation of mindfulness
Sayambhūñāṇa	self-evolved wisdom
Setughāta	breaking the bridge
Sikkhā	training
Sīla	morality
Sīlabbataparāmāsa	clinging to rites and rituals
Sobhana	beautiful

Somanassa	joy
Sotāpanna	stream-enterer
Sotāpatti	stream-entry
Subhakiṇha	the realm of steady aura
Suddhāvāsa	the pure abode
Sugatibhūmi	plane of happiness
Sukha	happiness, pleasure, pleasant
Sukkhavipassaka	dry insight worker
Suññātā	voidness
Suriya	sun
Tadaṅganibbāna	factor of nibbāna
Takkavīthi	reasoning
Tatramajjhattatā	specific neutrality
Tāvatiṃsa	the realm of the thirty-three gods
Tevijja	triple knowledge
Thīna	sloth
Ṭhīti	presence
Ṭīkā	subcommentary
Tiracchānayoni	animal kingdom
Tirobhāva	disappearance
Tirokuḍḍaṃ	through walls
Tiro-pabbataṃ	through mountains
Tiro-pākāraṃ	through enclosures
Tisso sikkhā	three trainings
Tunhībhāva	silence
Ubbega	uplifting
Ubhatobhāgavimutta	liberated in both ways
Udaka	water
Udayabbaya	rise and fall
Uddhacca	restlessness
Uddhambhāgiya	pertaining to the higher worlds
Uggahanimitta	learning sign
Ummujja-nimujjaṃ	dive in and out
Upacāra	access
Upacārasamādhi	access concentration
Upādāna	clinging

Upadhiviveka	seclusion from the substance
Upakkilesa	impediment, corruption
Upanijjhāna	contemplation
Upekkhā	equanimity
Uppāda	arising
Uttarati	rises up
Vacīsaṅkhāra	activity of speech
Vasitā	mastery
Vatthukāma	objective sense pleasure
Vavassagga	renunciation
Vavatthāpana	definition
Vedanā	feeling
Vedayita	being felt
Veditabba	to be realized
Vicāra	sustained thought
Vicaya	investigation
Vicikicchā	doubt
Vihiṃsā vitakka	thought of harming
Vijānana	mode of cognizing
Vijjā	knowledge
Vijjācaraṇasampanna	endowed with knowledge and conduct
Vikkhambhanaviveka	seclusion by suppression
Vikkhambanappahāna	abandoning by way of suppression
Vikubbana	transformation
Vīmaṃsa	inquiry
Vimokkha (Vimokha)	liberation
Vimokkhamukha	gateway to liberation
Vimutti	emancipation
Vimuttirasa	taste of freedom
Vinipāta	the downfall
Vinīvaraṇacitta	the mind devoid of the hindrances
Viññāṇa	consciousness
Viññāṇañcāyatana	base of boundless consciousness
Viḻḻu	the wise
Vipāka	result
Vipassanā	insight

Vipassanāyānika	one who makes (bare) insight his vehicle
Viriya	energy
Visuddhi	purification
Vitakka	applied thought
Viveka	seclusion
Vuṭṭhāna	emergence
Yāna	vehicle
Yathākammūpagañāṇa	knowledge of faring according to kamma
Yoga	bonds
Yogin	meditator
Yonisomanasikāra	wise consideration

List of Abbreviations used

AN.	The Aṅguttara Nikāya
AN.A.	The Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakatha (Manorathapūraṇi)
AN.T.	The Aṅguttara Nikāya Ṭīkā (Sāratthamañjūsā)
BD.	The Book of the Discipline
BMTP.	Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice
Dhp.	The Dhammapada
Dhs.	The Dhammasaṅgani
Dhs.A.	The Dhammasaṅgani Aṭṭhakathā (Aṭṭhasālinī)
DN.	The Dīgha Nikāya
DN.A.	The Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sumaṅgala Vilāsini)
DN.T.	The Dīgha Nikāya Ṭīkā
Dial.	Dialogues of the Buddha
GS.	The Book of the Gradual Saying
KS.	The Book of the Kindred Sayings
Milp.	The Milindapañha
MLS.	The Middle Length Sayings
MN.	The Majjhima Nikāya
MN.A.	The Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Papañcasūdani)
MN.T.	The Majjhima Nikāya Ṭīkā
PI.	Progress of Insight
PP.	Path of Purification
Psy. Ethics.	Buddhist Psychological Ethics
Pts.	The Paṭisambhidāmagga
Pts.A.	The Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā (Saddhammappakāsinī)
Pug.P.	The Dhātukathā Puggalapaññattipāli
QKM.	The Questions of King Milinda
SN.	The Saṃyutta Nikāya
SN.A.	The Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sāratthapakāsanī)
SN.T.	The Saṃyutta Nikāya Ṭīkā
Vibh.	The Vibhaṅga
Vimv.T.	The Vimativinodani Ṭīkā (Samantapāsādikāṭīkā)
Vinp.	The Vinaya Piṭakaṃ
Vin.A.	The Vinayaṭṭhakathā (Samantapāsādikā)
Vism.	The Visuddhimagga
Vism.T.	The Visuddhimagga Mahā Ṭīkā (Paramatthamañjūsā).

Selected Bibliography

Primary Sources

Because the Burmese Buddhasāsana Samiti editions of the commentaries and subcommentaries sometimes use titles different from those by which the works are generally known, we enclose the standard titles in brackets before giving the titles of the commentaries and subcommentaries used by the Buddhasāsana Samiti.

1. Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Vinaya Piṭaka

Oldenberg, Hermann, ed. T*he Vinaya Piṭakam*: *One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pali Language*. Pali Text Society [Publication Series], vols. 147-48, 160-62. 5 vols., London: Luzac & Co., 1879-1964.

Sutta Piṭaka

Anderson, Dines and Smith, Helmer, eds., *Sutta-Nipāta*, New ed., Pali Text Society [Publication Series] Vol. 72. 1913; reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1965.

Feer, M. Léon, ed., *The Saṃyutta-Nikāya of the Sutta-Piṭaka*. [Pts. 1-5: *Sagātha-Vagga*, *Nidāna-Vagga*, *Khandha-Vagga*, *Saḷāyatana-Vagga*, and *Mahā-Vagga*, edited by M. Léon Feer; pt. 6: Indexes, by Mrs. Rhys Davids]. Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 8, 19, 25, 31, 42, 56. 6 vols. 1884-1904; reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1960-70.

Mahā Niddesapāḷi. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960.

Morris, Richard and Hardy, E. eds., The *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* [Pt. 1: *Ekanipāta*, *Dukanipāta*, and *Tikanipāta*, edited by Richard Morris. 2d ed., revised by A. K. Warder; pt. 2: *Catukka-Nipāta*, edited by Richard Morris; pt. 3: *Pancaka-Nipāta and Chakka-Nipāta*, edited by E. Hardy; pt. 4: *Sattaka-Nipāta*, *Aṭṭhaka-Nipāta*, *and Navaka-Nipāta*, edited by E. Hardy; pt. 5: *Dasaka-Nipāta and Ekādasaka-Nipāta*, edited by E. Hardy; pt. 6: Indexes by Mable Hunt; revised and edited by C. A. F. Rhys Davids]. Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 10, 20, 35, 44, 46, 66. 6 vols. 1880-1910; reprint, London: Luzac & Co., 1956-67.

Paṭisambhidāmaggapāḷi. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. Rangoon. Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1962.

Rhys Davids, T. W. and Carpenter, J. Estlin, eds. *The Digha Nikāya*. [Vols. 1-2: edited by T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter; vol. 3: edited by J. Estlin Carpenter]. Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 22, 52, 67. 3 vols. 1880-1910; reprint, London: Luzac & Co., 1960-67.

Trenckner, V. and Chalmer, Robert, eds. *The Majjhima-Nikāya*. [Vol. 1: edited by V. Trenckner; vols. 2-3: edited by Robert Chalmers; vol. 4: Index of Words, edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids]. Pali Text Society [Publications], vols. 17, 39, 45, 47, 51, 99. 6 vols. in 4. (1888-1925); reprint (4 vols.), London: Luzac & Co., 1960-64.

Abhidhamma Piṭaka

Dhammasaṅgaṇipāḷi. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961.

Dhātukathā Puggalapaññattipāḷi. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961.

Vibhaṅgapāḷi. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961.

2. Commentaries on Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Vinaya Piṭaka

Buddhaghosa. [*Vinaya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Samanta Pāsādikā*)]. [Vols. 1-2:] *Pārājikākaṇḍa Aṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 3:] *Pācityādi Aṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 4:] *Cūḷavaggādi Aṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 4 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1963-67.

Sutta Piṭaka

Buddhaghosa. [*Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Sumangalavilāsinī*)]. [Vol. 1:] *Sīlakkhandhavaggaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 2:] *Mahāvaggaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 3;] *Pāthikavaggaṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961-68.

[*Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*. (*Papañcasūdanī*)]. [Vols. 1-2:] *Mūlapaṇṇāsaṭṭhakathā*; [Vol. 3:] *Majjhimapaṇṇāsaṭṭhakathā*; [vol. 4:] *Uparipaṇṇāsaṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 4 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1957.

[*Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*] *Sāratthappakāsinī Nāma Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1957.

[*Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*] *Manorathapūraṇī Nāma. Aṅguttaraṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1958-68.

Mahānāma. [*Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā*] *Saddhammappakāsinī Nāma Paṭisambhidāmaggaṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1958.

Abhidhamma Piṭaka

Buddhaghosa. [*Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā* (*Aṭṭhasālinī*)]. *Aṭṭhasālinī Aṭṭhakathā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961.

3. Subcommentaries on Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Vinaya Piṭaka

Kassapa Thera, Coliya. [*Samantapāsādikā Vinayaṭṭhakathā Ṭīkā*] *Vimativinodanīṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960.

Sariputta Thera. [*Samantapāsādikā Vinayaṭṭhakathā Ṭīkā*] *Săratthadīpanīṭīkā*, [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960.

Sutta Piṭaka

Dhammapāla. [*Dīgha Nikāya Ṭīkā*]. Vol. 1:] *Sīlakkhandhavaggaṭīkā*; [vol. 2:] *Mahāvaggaṭīkā*, [Vol. 3:1 *Pāthikavaggaṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960-61.

[*Majjhima Nikāya Ṭīkā*] [Vols. 1-2:] *Mūlapaṇṇāsaṭīkā*; [vol. 3:] *Majjhimapaṇṇāsaṭīkā... Uparipaṇṇāsaṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960-61.

[*Saṃyutta Nikāya Ṭīkā*] *Saṃyuttaṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script] 2 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961.

Sāriputta. [*Aṅguttara Nikāya Ṭīkā*] *Săratthamañjūsā Nāma Aṅguttara Ṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 3 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960-61.

4. New Subcommentaries on Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Sutta Piṭaka

Ñāṇābhivaṃsa. [*Dīgha Nikāya Abhinava Ṭīkā*] *Sādhuvilāsinī Nāma Sīlakkhandhavagga Abhinavaṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1961.

5. Treatises on Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Anuruddha, *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*. Edited by Ariyaratna Rerukana. [Pali Text in Sinhalese script]. Colombo, Ceylon: P. K. W. Siriwardhane, Granthadarsa Press, 1942.

Buddhaghosa. *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosācariya*. Edited by Henry Clarke Warren. Revised by Dhammānanda Kosambi. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Trenckner, V. *Milindapañho*, *Being Dialogues Between King Milinda and the Buddhist Sage Nāgasena*. [Pali Text Society Publication Series no. 69]. London: Luzac & Co., 1880-1962.

6. Commentaries on Treatises on Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Dhammapāla. [*Visuddhlmagga Mahā Ṭīkā*] *Paramatthamañjūsā Nāma Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā*. [Pali Text in Burmese script]. 2 vols. Rangoon, Burma: Buddhasāsana Samiti, 1960.

Sumangala. [*Vibhāvanī Ṭīkā*] *Anuruddhācariya's Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha with Abhidhammattha Vibhāvanīṭīkā*. Revised and edited by Bhadanta Revatadhammatthera. [Pali Text in Devanagari script]. Vārāṇasi, India: Bauddha Svādhyāya, Sātra, 1965.

7. Translations of Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Vinaya Piṭaka

Horner, I. B. trans. *The Book of the Discipline* (*Vinaya-Piṭaka*). Vols. 1-3: (*Suttavibhaṅga*), vol. 4: (*Mahāvagga*), vol. 5: (*Cullavagga*), vol. 6: (*Parivāra*), [Sacred Books of the Buddhists Series, vols. 10-11, 13-14, 20, 25], 6 vols. London: Luzac & Co., 1951-72.

Sutta Piṭaka

Buddhadatta Mahāthera, Ambalangoda Polvatte, trans. and ed., *Dhammapadaṃ: An Anthology of Sayings of the Buddha*. Colombo, Sri Lanka: Apothecaries Co., n.d.

Hare, E. M., trans. *Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists* (*Sutta-Nipāta*). The Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. 15. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1945-47.

Horner, I. B., trans. and ed., *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*). [Vol. 1: *The First Fifty Discourses* (*mulapaṇṇāsa*); vol. 2: *The Middle Fifty Discourses* (*majjhimapaṇṇāsa*); vol. 3: *The Final Fifty Discourses* (*uparipaṇṇāsa*)]. Pali Text Society [Translation Series nos. 29-31]. 3 vols. 1954-59. Reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1970.

Rhys Davids, T. W. and Rhys Davids, C. A. F., trans. *Dialogues of the Buddha* (*Dīgha-Nikāya*). [Vol. 1: translated by T. W. Rhys Davids; vols. 2-3: translated by T. W. Rhys Davids and C. A. F. Rhys Davids. Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vols. 2-4]. 3 vols. 1889-1921. Reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1956-77.

Rhys Davids, C. A. F., and Woodward, F. L., trans. *The Book of the Kindred Sayings* (*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*) *or Grouped Suttas*. (Pt. 1: *Kindred Sayings with verses* (*Sagātha-Vagga*), translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids assisted by Suriyagoda Sumangala Thera; pt. 2: *The Nidana Book* (*Nidāna-Vagga*), translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids assisted by F. L. Woodward; pt. 3; translated by F. L. Woodward and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids; pt. 4: translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; pt. 5: (*Mahā-Vagga*), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids. Pali Text Society Translation Series, vols. 7, 10, 13-15]. 5 vols. 1927-30. Reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1956-71.

Woodward, F. L. and Hare, E. M., trans. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings* (*Aṅguttara-Nikāya*) or *More-Numbered Suttas*. [Vol. 1: (*Ones*, *Twos*, *Threes*), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 2: (*The Book of the Fours*), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 3: (*The Books of the Fives and Sixes*), translated by E. M. Hare with an introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 4: (*The Books of the Sevens*, *Eights and Nines*), translated by E. M. Hare with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids; vol. 5: (*The Book of the Tens and Elevens*), translated by F. L. Woodward with an Introduction by Mrs. Rhys Davids. Pali Text Society Translation Series nos. 22, 24, 25-27]. 5 vols. 1932-36. Reprint. London: Luzac & Co., 1936-72.

Abhidhamma Piṭaka

Rhys Davids, Caroline A. F., trans. *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*: *A Buddhist Manual of the Fourth Century B. C.*, *Being a Translation*, *Now Made for the First Time*, *from the Original Pali of the First Book in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka Entitled Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi* (*Compendium of States of Phenomena*) with Introductory Essay and Notes, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, vol. 12. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1900.

8. Translations of Pali Commentaries

Abhidhamma Piṭaka

Buddhaghosa. *The Expositor* (*Aṭṭhasālinī*), *Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, *the First Book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Translated by Pe Maung Tin. Revised and edited by C. A. F. Rhys Davids. Pali Text Society Translation Series, nos. 8, 9. 2 vols. London: Luzac & Co., 1920-58.

9. Translations of Treatises on Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Anuruddha. *Compendium of Philosophy*, *Being a Translation Now Made for the First Time from the Original Pali of the Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*. Translated with Introductory Notes and Essay by Shwe Zan Aung. Revised and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids. Pali Text Society Translation Series, vol. 2. London: H. Frowde, 1960.

A Manual of Abhidhamma, *Being Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha of Bhadanta Anuruddhācariya*, edited in the Original Pali Text with English Translation and Explanatory Notes. Translated by Nārada Mahāthera, Colombo, Ceylon: Vajirārāma, 1956. Rev, 3d ed. Kandy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon): Buddhist Publication Society, 1975.

Abhidharmartha Saṅgrahaya. Translated [into Sinhalese] by Sāriputra Sangharāja Mahāthera. Revised and edited by the Very Rev. Paññāmoli Tissa Thera. 2d ed. Randombe, Ceylon: W. E. De Silva, Hetumuni Semaneris De Silva and R. C. P. Weerasuriya Waidyaratna, 1916.

Buddhaghosa. *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*). Translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. Colombo, Ceylon: R. Semage, 1956.

Rhys Davids, T. W., trans. and ed., *The Questions of King Milinda*. The Sacred Books of the East, vol. 25. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1890.

10. Selections from Pali Texts of the Tipiṭaka

Nyanaponika Thera, trans. and ed. *The Five Mental Hindrances and Their Conquest*, *Selected Texts from the Pali Canon and the Commentaries*. Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1961.

Nyanatiloka, Comp. and trans. *The Word of the Buddha*: *An Outline of the Teaching of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon*. Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1959.

Comp., trans. and ed. *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, *Being A Systematic Exposition in the Words of the Sutta-Piṭaka*. Colombo, Ceylon: The Bauddha Sahitya Sabha, 1952. Rev. 3d ed. Colombo, Ceylon: The Bauddha Sahitya Sabha, 1969.

Soma Thera. Comp., trans. and ed. *The Removal of Distracting Thoughts, Vitakka-Saṇṭhāna Sutta*, *A Discourse of the Buddha* (*Majjhima-Nikāya No. 20*). Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1960.

The Way of Mindfulness, *Being a Translation of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya*; *Its Commentary*, *the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Vaṇṇanā of the Papañcasūdanī of Buddhaghosa Thera*; *and Excerpts from the Līnatthappakāsana Ṭīkā*, *Marginal Notes of Dhammapāla Thera on the Commentary*. Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1967.

Secondary Sources

Mahasi Sayadaw (U Sobhana Mahāthera of Burma), *The Progress of Insight Through the Stages of Purification*, *A Modern Pali Treatise on Buddhist Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation*. Translated by Nyanaponika Thera with notes and the Original Pali Text. Kandy, Ceylon: The Forest Hermitage, 1965. Reprint. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1973.

Vajirañāṇa, Paravahera. *Buddhist Meditation In Theory and Practice*, *A General Exposition According to the Pali Canon of the Theravāda School*. Colombo, Ceylon: M. D. Gunasena & Co., 1962.

For PDF production

Intentionally Blank: